

*Janetta*

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# Chapter 1.

In 1874 the clergyman George Herbert Woolley, parish priest of St. Matthew's, Upper Clapton, London, and Sarah Cathcart, married. Eleven children were born to this union, including George Cathcart, colonial administrator in northern Borneo; Charles Leonard Woolley, considered the first modern archaeologist; Alice Mary, who married the painter Felix Eyskens; Herbert Martin, who died on the Somme in 1916; Amy Kathleen, who taught in Tokyo; Frances Rachel, headmistress of a diocesan school first in Jamaica, then in India; and Geoffrey Harold, father of Janetta.

George Cathcart, the first-born, born on 24 December 1876 in Tyn-y-Celyn, North Wales, was educated at Merchant Taylors' School and then at Queen's College, Oxford.

In 1901 he joined the Land Office of the North Borneo Chartered Company in Labuan, Malaya, performing various duties in North Borneo. Fulfilling his duties as Land Commissioner, he traveled extensively conducting supplies and settling various territorial disputes. He took a keen interest in the natives and their customs, especially the Murut tribe. During his lifetime he amassed a respectable collection of artifacts indigenous to the land, including many weapons, such as the *kries* or *kerises*. Woolley donated several of these items to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, which were later acquired by the Sabah Museum.

He also served as District Officer at Jesselton, Beaufort, and later as Resident of the Interior Division, during which time he deepened his interest in and knowledge of local customs and traditions.

In the 1930s he was commissioned by the Borneo government to investigate the causes of indigenous depopulation, especially among the Muruts and Kadazandusuns, and to determine what measures could be taken to reverse the trend.

After his retirement in 1932, he resided briefly in England, returning to Borneo two years later, where he served “constantly and readily” according to a report at the time. In 1940, in recognition of his services, he was awarded the North Borneo General Service Medal. In retirement, on the eve of the war, he published several articles on local traditions. These notes represent a valuable record, for it was the first time that these “adats” were formally recorded in writing, and in the future they served as a reference for scholars in the field. In 1941 he entered active service, serving as Protector of Labour and Secretary for Chinese Affairs.

Between 1942 and September 1945, along with other European civilians, Woolley was interned in a Japanese prison camp at Batu Lintang in the city of Kuching, Sarawak. Despite his advanced age, he was severely beaten and tortured, including a 30-day confinement in a dungeon on rice and water. After the war, when the guards who had mistreated him were brought to trial, he refused to testify against them, arguing that it would only encourage distrust and revenge among the men.

George Cathcart Woolley died on 6 December 1947, and was buried in the old Anglican Cemetery, Jesselton, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

The second son of the couple was Sir Charles Leonard Woolley, born on 17 April 1880 in Upper Clapton, London.

He attended St. John's School, Leatherhead Estate, and later New College, Oxford.

After graduating in 1905, he joined the Ashmolean Museum as an assistant. A year later, on the recommendation of Arthur Evans, he took part in Francis Haverfield’s excavations at Corbridge, thus beginning his professional career. Years later, in his book *Spadework*, he confessed: “I had never studied archaeological methods even from books... and I had no idea how to make a survey or a ground-plan”.

Between 1907 and 1911 he was in present-day Sudan as part of the British expedition working at the Egyptian site of Wadi Halfa.

Between 1912 and 1914, together with T. E. Lawrence (better known as Lawrence of Arabia), he directed excavations at the Hittite city of Karkemish in northern Syria. His findings were published over several decades between 1921 and 1953. He then went to Egypt to direct the excavation of Amarna, the sacred city of Pharaoh Akhnaton.

In early 1914, following directions from the British Museum, Woolley and Lawrence joined the Palestine Exploration Fund and traveled to the Sinai Peninsula, where they were to join Captain Stewart Newcombe's expedition. They were to present what was essentially a military topographical survey as an academic study. By March they were back in Karkemish, where they began to write a report entitled *The Wilderness of Zin*, which was completed between June and September and sent to Oxford.

With the outbreak of war in early August, Woolley, Captain Newcombe and Lawrence moved to Cairo to join the Military Intelligence Department. They immediately set about map-making and intelligence-gathering of all kinds. They also devised political strategies for the area. Although they were not yet fully defined in the spring of 1915, they hinted at a partition of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the war. On the one hand, France was clearly interested in Syria; on the other, Russia had claims to the Dardanelles and Constantinople; while the United Kingdom aspired to Mesopotamia and the port of Alexandria. Although the differences between the Allies over their interests and the future of Turkey were already apparent, the French and British agreed on the need to encourage the subversion of the Arab territories.

While carrying out his intelligence duties, Woolley was taken prisoner. His brother, Geoffrey, who was fighting in France, recalled years later in his memoirs *Sometimes a Soldier*: "About the same time Leonard, who was doing intelligence work in Egypt, was blown up in a yacht while placing agents on the north Syrian coast. He was rescued, but as a Turkish prisoner, and spent two years of bitter captivity at Kedos and Kastamuni". Woolley himself recounted these experiences in a book entitled: *From Kastamuni to Kedos, being a record of experiences of prisoners of war in Turkey, 1916-1918* (Oxford, B. Blackwell, 1921).

After the war, he returned to archaeology. Between 1922 and 1934 he directed excavations in the ancient Sumerian city of Ur. Among the most important discoveries was the royal cemetery, dated to around 2,700 BC, which is one of the most important milestones in the field in the 20th century. Other famous pieces found during the expedition include the Copper Bull; the pair of Ram in a Thicket (one of which is preserved in the British Museum); and the royal standard of Ur, which revealed the existence of an exquisite sumptuary art and complex technical elaboration, as well as the practice of sacrificial burial of the king with his cohort of servants. Moreover, the detail and proximity of the work and its subsequent study enabled historians to reconstruct Sumerian court society from its proto-historical beginnings in the 4th millennium BC until its demise in the 4th century BC.

Following his discoveries at Ur, Woolley turned his attention to investigating any possible links between the ancient Aegean and Mesopotamian civilisations, which led him to the Syrian port of Al Mina and the neighboring Tell Atchana, where he excavated between 1937 and 1939 and again between 1946 and 1949.

During the Second World War he was appointed lieutenant colonel and assigned to the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section of the Allied armies, which was responsible for recovering, protecting and conserving all artifacts threatened by the conflict. "Prior to this war — Woolley recalls —, no army had thought of protecting the monuments of the country in which and with which it was at war, and there were no precedents to follow... All this was changed by a general order issued by Supreme Commander-in-Chief [Eisenhower] just before he left Algiers, an order accompanied by a personal letter to all Commanders... the good name of the Army depended in great measure on the respect which it showed to the art heritage of the modern world".

Woolley married Katharine Elizabeth Menke, widow of Lieutenant Colonel Bertram Francis Eardley Keeling, an engineer and astronomer.

Menke was born in England in 1888 into a prominent family of German origin. She began studying history at Oxford University, but soon after her frail health forced her to drop out.

During the war, despite her origins, she decided to serve as a nurse in the British ranks. It was there that she met Keeling, whom she married in March 1919, though apparently without consummating the marriage.

This first brief marriage was shrouded in mystery. Her husband was posted to the intelligence services in Egypt (where Woolley was serving), and once the war was over the couple decided to take their honeymoon in the Middle East.

On 20 September 1919, Katherine fell ill and a doctor was called. After inspection, he spoke privately with her husband. Keeling left the house, settled some unfinished business, and a few hours later shot himself in the head at the foot of the Cheops pyramid. The investigation revealed that Keeling was under no particular stress and that his profile did not match that of a suicide, so it was deduced that he must have acted in a state of temporary insanity. However, the motive was never discovered. Henrietta McCall, in her lecture “Katharine Woolley and Archeology” (British Museum, 2012), suggested that the doctor had revealed something so shocking to Keeling that he was driven to this drastic decision. Katharine was so shocked by all this that she vowed never to marry again.

Eventually Menke resumed her activities as a nurse and traveled through Baghdad. It was then that she arrived at Ur, where she impressed everyone with her painting skills.

Between 1925 and 1934, Katherine served as field assistant to her boss, Leonard Woolley. In a letter dated 1926, he said: “Speaking quite officially I can say that I consider the Expedition to be very much indebted to Mrs. Keeling”. However, Katharine was the subject of much criticism for her strong and tyrannical personality; Woolley's biographer, Harry V. F. Winstone described her as “demanding”, “implacable” and “calculating”.

The authorities in charge of the excavation team did not take kindly to the presence of a single woman at the sites, and many of the benefactors threatened to withdraw their contributions. In a confidential letter dated 8 July 1926, George Bryon Gordon, the director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, advised Woolley to remove his assistant immediately. He argued that “the presence of a lone woman with four men in camp makes a more

interesting figure for some of them than the outline of ziggurats". The archaeologist replied: "I do think that the presence of a lady has a good moral effect on the younger fellows in the camp and keeps them up to standard". Finally, Gordon told Woolley that she could only continue in her position if she married. Although Katherine relished the male attention, she refused to engage in any kind of intimate contact, bringing up her latest unhappy love affair. Woolley insisted, however, and she relented, but on one strange condition: their marriage was not to be consummated. Perhaps trusting that she would change her mind in time, Woolley agreed, and they were married on 11 April 1927.

In 1928, Agatha Christie visited the Ur camp. This was frowned upon by Katharine, who thought that the presence of other women would distract the men's attention, hitherto focused only on her. Christie struck up a relationship with Max Mallowan, Woolley's young assistant, who was unsuccessfully courting his boss's wife. However, he himself described her as "venomous", "with a domineering, willful personality". Christie and Mallowan married in 1930. Thereafter, the novelist was no longer welcome there, and her husband retired soon after. *Murder in Mesopotamia* (1936) was inspired by this whole situation. The character of Louise Leidner, the beautiful but troubled young wife of a famous archaeologist, who is murdered in her sleep, was inspired by Katherine. "Fortunately — said Mallowan —, and perhaps not unexpectedly, Katharine did not recognize certain traits which might have been taken as applicable to herself, and took no umbrage".

In 1929, Katherine published a book: *Adventure Calls*. The protagonist is a woman who dresses up as a man in order to have adventures and experience a side of life that was forbidden to her. She joins an expeditionary group, and together with another member, who soon becomes her best friend, takes an active part in the discoveries. At the end of the book, she reveals her true identity and marries him.

Around the same time Woolley wrote to his lawyer asking him to make all the necessary arrangements for a divorce, since his wife, as she had warned him, refused to have sexual intercourse. At this point, he suspected that this might be due to some kind of physical defect. Speaking of Louise Leidner, Christie would say: "She was already essentially an egoist. Such

women naturally revolt from the idea of marriage. They may be attracted to men, but they prefer to belong to themselves".

However, the separation did not materialize. Perhaps because Katharine was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and Woolley would have considered divorce an unnecessary cruelty. Katharine continued to work with admirable energy and dedication, accompanying her husband in his artistic interests (she was a superb draftswoman and painter and published several newspaper articles), and performing strategically as a London socialite.

On the evening of 8 November 1945, Katharine felt ill, and told her husband that she would probably not make it through the night. Her instincts did not deceive her.

There was much speculation about Katherine's sexuality; some even claimed that she was, like the character in her novel, a man in disguise. McCall, as we said, has an interesting theory. According to her, Menke suffered from "androgen insensitivity syndrome", a genetic condition in which the hormones responsible for developing male physical characteristics are not assimilated by the cells. This causes the body to develop an entirely feminine appearance. Sufferers of this condition do not possess any sexual organs, either male or female. This would explain what the doctor who examined her in Cairo observed in the first place, and Keeling's sudden and unexplained suicide. In other words, he would have told him that he had actually married a man. Secondly, her refusal to consummate her marriage to Woolley. The plot of her novel, on the other hand, would seem to be a clear artistic sublimation of her strange condition...

Leonard Woolley wrote more than 25 books, the most notable being *Digging Up The Past* (1930); *Abraham. Recent discoveries & Hebrew Origins* (1936); *Ur of the Chaldees: A Record of Seven Years of Excavation* (1950); *Spadework: Adventures in Archaeology* (1953); and *Excavations at Ur: A Record of 12 Years' Work*.

Alice Mary Woolley, the Woolley-Cathcart couple's third child and second female, was born in 1882. She studied art in Paris, where she married the famous Belgian painter Felix Eyskens. The couple took part in the artistic bohemia of their time, visiting Fernand Sabatté's atelier, and

she herself composed some poems (including *The Passing of the River*). In 1908 they had a daughter, Hildegarde; in the same year Lodewijk Jozef Catharina was born; another child, Veronica, in 1911; and Sylvia, the following year. Alice died of measles on 10 May 1913 in Bornheim, Belgium. In his autobiography, her brother Geoffrey says: "Mary was an artist. She studied in Paris and exhibited pictures in the Paris Salon. She married a young Belgian artist, Felix Eyskens. His father disapproved of art, so only gave him money for one year's stay in Paris. Felix then fended for himself and earned enough for further years by playing professional football. Mary died before 1914 from measles, caught while nursing one of her children. Felix survived the trials and dangers of two war-time invasions of Belgium and is now regarded as the leading artist of his country. We last met in Bruges in 1961, when he gave me a small oil-painting, done the previous year. The picture was of the canal closet o where we had been walking with him".

Alice was followed by another man, Herbert "Bertie" Martin, born on 27 September 1883. In 1908, after working in various nurseries and taking up a post at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, he traveled to Borneo to run a rubber tapping business. At the outbreak of war in 1914, he returned to England and joined the Essex Regiment, but soon abandoned his post and his officer training to enlist as a corporal in the 1st/5th Battalion, London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade), eager to see action as soon as possible. He was killed at the Battle of the Somme on 9 October 1916, shortly after the attack at Combles. Geoffrey recalled: "While I was on sick leave my third brother, Bertie, returned from British North Borneo. He had been trained at Kew Gardens and in Germany, and then was employed on rubber plantations in Borneo. When in England he had joined the old Militia, so I had no difficulty in helping him to get a commission in the Essex Regiment. He soon tired of England, so transferred as a private to the London Rifle Brigade; he did well with them in France and was quickly made a sergeant, then offered a commission. He was killed with the L. R. B. on the Somme in 1916".

In 1915 another of the sisters, Amy Kathleen, born in 1887, set off on a journey across Russia and Tokyo, where she was to become a teacher. "After leaving Somerville College,

Oxford — her brother recalled —, she had been trained for this work by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel".

The tenth and penultimate child of George Herbert Woolley and Sarah Cathcart was Geoffrey Harold, Janetta's father.

Born on 14 May 1892 in Bethnal Green, London, he attended Parmiter's School, Bethnal Green (1900-02), St. John's School Leatherhead (1902-11) and Queen's College Oxford (1911-14).

At the end of July 1914, the United Kingdom declared war on Germany. Reverend Woolley, Geoffrey's father, would say: "My son is a clergyman at heart. He never dreamt of being a soldier. But when war broke out he felt that he should throw up everything and go". Woolley joined the army on 4 August 1914, and on the 26th was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 5th Essex Battalion, which at the time was training near Drayton, Norfolk. In September he was transferred to the 9th Battalion of the London Regiment, popularly known as the Queen Victoria's Rifles, quartered in London. The corps embarked for France on 4 November. At the end of the month it landed in the theater of operations, posted to the trench line between Neuve Eglise and Wulverghem.

On his first day at the front, Woolley had a chance to shine when a grenade landed in his platoon. He quickly picked it up and threw it back at the enemy, saving his own life and those of his men. Shortly afterwards his unit was posted to Ypres, a town in north-eastern Belgium, part of the Western Front. In the opposite trenches, in the 1st Company of the 6th Bavarian Reserve Division, fought a young Adolf Hitler.

On 17 April 1915, the British seized a strategic point known as Hill 60, a small elevation in the southeast. Those who occupied it belonged to the Queen Victoria's Rifles, and were commanded by Major Thomas Prior Lees and Captain Gilbert Jocelyn Basil Fazakerley-Westby, of A and C Companies respectively. The enemy fire was so intense that it took them two hours to cover the nearly 200 yards that separated them from the hill. At about midnight, Sergeant Pulleyn was ordered to occupy a point just over the crest with only sixteen men. Eleven

succeeded, including Pulley. The situation was critical: Lees and Fazakerley-Westby had fallen, followed by two-thirds of his 150 troops. Despite constant night attacks, the British did not surrender. By dawn, only thirty men remained.

Then, as if in a vision, they distinguished an officer coming towards them, sometimes running, sometimes to the ground, crawling through the shrapnel and the shells. It was Second Lieutenant Woolley, who had been ordered to advance with his company and supply the defenders with ammunition. To their surprise, he jumped the parapet of the trench without a scratch, and immediately took command. Using a few jam-pot bombs, he organized a swift and desperate defense. In the midst of the fighting an officer arrived with a verbal order, and later a written one, urging Woolley to withdraw immediately with his remaining men. He replied that he and his men would not move until relieved. His withdrawal meant leaving the way clear for the Germans. At that moment an enemy grenade struck the lieutenant in the head; fortunately the explosion did not hit him directly, although it was enough to stun him and put two holes in his cap.

In the evening, the fighting was reduced to an artillery duel. But the effectiveness of the British armor had been drastically reduced by the fighting of the previous days. The next morning, when relief arrived, Woolley withdrew with only fourteen men out of the 150 who had arrived only two days earlier. In recognition of his services, the government awarded him the Victoria Cross, enclosing the following citation:

“For most conspicuous bravery on ‘Hill 60’ during the night of 20th–21st April, 1915.

Although the only Officer on the hill at the time, and with very few men, he successfully resisted all attacks on his trench, and continued throwing bombs and encouraging his men till relieved. His trench during all this time was being heavily shelled and bombed and was subjected to heavy machine gun fire by the enemy”.

Woolley was the first British officer to receive such a decoration during the war.

Two days later he was promoted to captain. He took part in the second part of the Battle of Ypres, until 23 April, when he was the victim of a gas attack, while preparing to advance with his company. He was sent to a rest camp and then to Red Cross Hospital No. 2 in Rouen, before being evacuated to Osborne on the Isle of Wight.

He soon returned to England, taking up residence on a farm belonging to his father, in order to recover his "shattered nerves". On hearing that the young officer was there, the soldiers stationed at Danbury (a small town only 13 kilometers away) were overjoyed. One of them even declared: "We would like to carry Lieutenant Woolley shoulder-high from Chelmsford Station to his father's house at Old Riffhams, up all the winding hill paths, for the whole eight miles, with the band playing 'The Conquering Hero'". Woolley was called to teach various courses at the Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, an institution for the training and preparation of officers who were to march to the front.

In September 1915 he returned to France to command B Company of the Queen Victoria's Rifles, now fighting on the Bray line on the Somme. In February 1916 he attended the first course of instruction at the Fourth Army School at Flixecourt. He made such a good impression on his superiors that in August he was attached to the Third Army Staff (based at Auxi-le-Château) as a second grade General Staff Officer, where he was to remain for five months.

On 21 March 1918 he was appointed assistant to General Roberston's staff and joined the 3rd Corps on 21 April. In June he was discharged and on 8 July married Janet Beatrix Orr-Ewing, daughter of Charles Lindsay Orr-Ewing and Beatrix Mary Leslie Hore-Ruthven. Paternal granddaughter of Sir Archibald Orr-Ewing, 1st Baronet of Ballikinrain, and maternal granddaughter of Walter James Hore-Ruthven, 9th Baronet of Ruthven of Freeland. On her father's side, she was descended from King Charles II of England and his mistress Louise de Kérouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth.

Janet was the widow of Captain George Culme-Seymour, who died at Ypres on 7 May 1915. After his death, his widow, then living in Tedworth Square, Chelsea, consoled herself with the

frequent visits of his younger comrade, captain Woolley. "Young, good-looking and unsophisticated", according to his stepdaughter, he came, as he himself discreetly put it, "to entertain the hope that we should marry when the war was over". With the approval of the bride's father-in-law, who admitted to harboring a long-standing desire for such a union, the wedding took place in June 1918. Jan later told her elder daughter that she knew the marriage had been a mistake a week into the honeymoon.

To this marriage two children were born: Harold Lindsay Cathcart "Rollo" Woolley, on 7 October 1919, and Janet "Janetta" Elizabeth Woolley, born on 21 December 1921 and baptized the following year in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, in the London Borough of Kensington.

Captain Woolley returned and remained at the front until the armistice. He was discharged on 1 February 1919, demobilized in March, and awarded the Cross of Military Merit on 3 June, on the occasion of the King's birthday.

He resumed his theological studies at Oxford University, was ordained on 19 December 1920, and took up a post at Rugby School, Warwickshire. He resigned in 1923 and took up the vicarage of the town of Monk Sherborne, Hampshire, before taking up the curacy of Harrow School in 1927.

In his memoir *Sometimes a soldier*, Woolley recounts a journey he made through Germany and France in 1934. It is a first-hand account of the critical political, social and cultural situation in inter-war Europe:

"In August, 1934, I took part in an unusual expedition to the continent. The National Council of Education of Canada had planned a gathering of teachers from all parts of the Empire to attend a special performance of the Passion Play at Oberammergau during the fourth-centenary celebration, and then to hold a Conference on Christianity and International Peace at Munich. Major Ney of the Canadian Council asked me to help by taking a service in the theater on the evening before the play; a Bishop was to give the address. As matters turned out the Bishop was ill, someone else failed to turn up, so I found myself put down to help at a

Holy Communion Service at 6.15 a.m. to take the whole of the open-air service, and to act as chairman of the conference at Munich. It so happened that the June murders of a number of Hitler's particular enemies took place ten days before we were due to start. The turmoil and uncertainty reduced our party from some two thousand to six hundred. The arrangements were for one party first to visit Berlin and have an audience with Hitler; the second party was to go to Rome and have an audience with the Pope. I had to start later, so went with a small third party to stay a couple of days at Frankfurt where the Schiller Festival was being held. All three parties were then to meet at Oberammergau, and after the conference visit Paris.

A squad of SS Blackshirts under an officer whose face betokened more evil than any human face I had ever seen searched our train at Cologne on the chance of finding any Jews on board. This prepared me for the general impression I was soon to form as to the likelihood of future peace. When I arrived at Frankfurt it was the day of Hindenberg's funeral. Red flags with the swastika were all at half-mast; the streets were almost silent of traffic and groups gathered outside restaurants, etc., to listen-in to the funeral at Tannenberg; outside the town hall was a large gathering round the official parade which concluded, after a minute's silence followed by national airs, with all men and women joining in repeated salutes of right arms outstretched. Schiller's Wallenstein in the open air of the great square, presented a magnificent spectacle: there were over a thousand performers. As well as the packed audience in the square, there were spectators in every window of the tall medieval houses, and searchlights lit up the scene. Owing to the late night and engine break-downs on the journey it was a tired party which met the main body late at Oberammergau.

About 180 people came to the early Communion Service and some 2,500 to the Evening Service. This was made rather protracted and difficult because it was preceded by welcoming speeches from the Mayor and another member of the redoubtable Lang family, both of which required translations and suitable replies; then an orchestra and choir, which had been requested to attend, had been given little time to practice and, unfortunately, different hymns and tunes. However, we made the best of it. At a gathering afterwards I found myself having a discussion with a German officer who had won the Iron Cross and had been severely wounded

at Verdun. He put it to me that he did not like war or want another war, but as man is a fighting animal wars are bound to happen, and so Germany was preparing for the next war. I suggested that men with their fighting instincts might yet combine to fight disease and poverty, or to conquer Mount Everest or the South Pole; in such warfare modern nations might rise above past animosities just as had the English, Scots and Welsh. This appeared to him a quite new idea which might upset the German philosophy of man.

The Passion Play entirely rose to our expectations and prepared us for the business of the conference. The conference opened against a somber background. We were informed in hushed tones that the Principal of the Studenten-Haus where our meetings were to be held had been murdered in a most brutal way a fortnight before; he was a person of international repute, but had Jewish blood.

A Baron, who was a Storm-trooper and also a representative of the Ministry of Education, gave us a formal welcome including a special message from Hitler. Blackshirts and Brownshirts were on duty at every entrance to the hall. We almost felt like prisoners. On the other hand we were given the freedom of the city, with passes to every Museum and Gallery, and for use on trams. On one sight-seeing tour I caught a glimpse of Hitler, who had come from Berlin to inspect progress in the building of the Brown House. The conference like all such was full of words; probably the opening papers were of a high level, but as chairman I had to restrain one professor as his thought, though deep, was so long that increasing coughs were preventing him from being heard and there would have been no time left for other speakers. Amongst other entertainments we were taken to the opera. It was Wagner's *Die Walkure*. My host whispered that it was not up to its usual standard as the best performers, who were liable to be of Jewish origin, had been withdrawn from the cast. I was puzzled at first that between the acts my hostess made off hurriedly to a telephone; later I learned the reason — she had Jewish blood, and went to telephone her home to make sure that her two sons, aged eighteen and sixteen, were not murdered during her absence. The opera itself somehow traveled from the sublime to the ridiculous and on to a horror of warning — there was the grand music and scenic effects; the fatuous postures and protracted — oh, so

protracted — scenes of love or unbridled temper; the repeated stroking of golden hair; the shifting of spear from right hand to left; the almost flabby look of cheeks and overdone eyes of Sigmund and Brunnhilde; the threatening deification of bluster, blood and flames of war, that summed up an aspect of the German race as it was at that day. It was a relief to get away from the final ring of fire. The conference ended on a realistic note; Professor Morrison gave the hard facts, historical and psychological, which presented difficulties to the way of peace.

It was still more a relief when our train took us across the frontier into France. We left a nightmare behind us, and the French Government seemed determined to give us such a welcome as should put all thought of Germany into the shade. We needed the change all the more as during the train journey we were able to compare notes about whispered conversations and had supplied ourselves with copies of Hitler's *Way to Power* and other official statements about the aims and methods of the Party — an end to democracy, no opportunity for criticism to be allowed, a new state religion, the rise of the true Nibelung nation. My only surprise in 1939 was that war had not come much sooner.

With the Canadian party I was very comfortable in the Hotel Lutetia with windows looking across to the Eiffel Tower. It was most refreshing in the morning to walk to the Place de la Concorde and in the gardens of the Tuileries. In the afternoon we were entertained by the Government in the Palace of Versailles. At the reception Major Ney insisted on resuming my post as chairman and so being the spokesman for the party. In my school-days I could read French easily, but had never been taught to speak; during the war I often had to act as interpreter for my battalion, as so few Londoners could speak a word of French; and during our time in Algiers in the Second World War after the French had decided no longer to adhere to Vichy and came on our side, we entertained a party of French officers. With a strong sense of courtesy as a host I gabbled my best French, but a charming colonel with white hair and beard and glistening gray eyes interrupted me: 'Monsieur,' he said, 'your French is excellent, but I understand your English better. Please speak in your own language.' In the magic of Versailles, and encouraged by champagne, I forsook after a while the medium of English and voiced the raptured thanks of the party in French, no doubt hideously pronounced. The effort appeared

successful, for the curator gave me his card and promised on my next visit to show me all the best things.

We had three more days of fascinating sight-seeing around Paris, which included a reception by the civic authorities at the Hotel de Ville. Two outstanding events were a visit to the opera and a special service at Notre Dame. The opera was Gounod's Faust; nothing could have been a greater contrast to what we had seen in Munich. Here there seems to be the spirit of the French nation in the charm of music, the scenic effects such as the crowd at a country fair or the soldiers' march, and in the wonderful dancing of the ballet. At the cathedral Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris, received us. He knew that most of us were Protestants, but he gave a magnificent address on Franco-British friendship and, without distinction of denomination, on the spiritual role of education in the making of peace. After a fine organ recital we were shown the special treasures of the cathedral and were introduced to the Archbishop. I had stayed with my wife and friends in Paris in the early '20s, but on this occasion, in a unique way, the charms of the city were spread out before us with an unforgettable lavishness. After our return to England I felt the need to exercise and went with my son, now getting into his stride at Rugby School, for a bicycle tour through the most lovely parts of Surrey, Sussex and Kent.

In the spring of 1935 a still more delightful opportunity of travel was offered to me. An association of Teachers of Religious Knowledge had planned a visit to Palestine and they invited me to accompany them as chaplain. It was easy to persuade Dr. Laborde, the Harrow School geography master, to go with me. In 1930 we had both been on a Hellenic Travellers' Cruise (for which schoolmasters were able to obtain tickets at a reduced rate); this had suited him as a geography expert and myself as a classic. The whole cruise had been a complete joy with visits to Olympia and Athens, where after the usual conducted tour I was able to revisit the Parthenon by moonlight; in Constantinople there was time to visit the chief Mosques and Santa Sophia, and also to wander round the bazaars, discuss problems with young Turks and cross over to Florence Nightingale's grim hospital at Scutari. We were also able to land on Cos and learn the secrets of the nature cures of Hippocrates at the Temple of Aesculapius which

were the prototypes of many of the modern systems being introduced into the British Isles from America; then on to Rhodes with its Street of the Knights, including the house with the Emblem of England; and finally to Crete where I was able to see the results of the excavations by Sir Arthur Evans under whose guidance my brother Leonard had started his career as an archaeologist".

In January 1940 Woolley returned to active service, joining the Royal Army Chaplains' Department. He was appointed Chaplain General at Algiers in November 1942, with the rank of Major.

Then came another blow for Geoffrey: his wife Janet died of pneumonia on 14 February 1943, and he fell ill in May, suffering from pleurisy and pneumonia. To make matters worse, he contracted dysentery in hospital. Nevertheless, after six weeks of rest he returned to Africa and resumed his activities. On 18 September 1943, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire, "in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in North Africa". On board the R. M. S. *Scynthia* he suffered heavy bombardment off the coast of Algiers. At this time the soldiers called him "Woodbine Willie of Algiers".

Back in England, he acted as Vicar at St. Mary's and remarried, on 12 June 1945, to Elcie Elisabeth "Betty" Nichols. The couple had a son, Geoffrey Nicholas, born in 1946.

Between 1952 and 1958, Woolley was Rector at West Grinstead, Sussex. In 1963 he published his autobiography, *Sometimes a Soldier*. He was also the author of *The Epic of the Mountains* (1929); *Fear and Religion* (1930); *A Journey to Palestine* (1935) and *A Pocket-Book of Prayers* (1940).

He died at Hunter's Barn, West Chiltington, near Pulborough, Sussex, on 10 December 1968, and was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, West Chiltington.

So much for the story of the parents and uncles of our protagonist. A state official obsessed with the tribes of distant Borneo. A renowned archaeologist, companion of Lawrence of Arabia and acquaintance of Agatha Christie, involved in a curious marriage. An educator in Tokyo and

a bohemian young woman. And that brave officer who postponed his deep-rooted mystical inclination to heed the call of the fatherland.

## Chapter 2.

We said that at the time of her marriage to Captain Woolley, "Jan" Orr-Ewing was the widow of Captain Culme-Seymour, killed at Ypres. Angela and Mark were born of this first marriage.

Before we begin Janetta's story, let's meet this half-sister. Like her, she was noted for her beauty. A newspaper of the time described her: "...a tall, slender Englishwoman with blue eyes and a lovely smile". Another trait she shared with her sister was her strong character and total lack of scruples about doing whatever she pleased. As we shall see, this idiosyncratic attitude was to separate the sisters for decades.

In his extensive memoirs he warns his readers: "I have written about my having been pretty and/or beautiful because it would have been false modesty not to do so. I do not feel embarrassed, it was so long ago, as if I were another person. But there it was, beauty that I was lucky enough to be born with and it was part of my life".

Angela received a rather liberal education, first attending Bedales School in Hampshire and then Dartington Hall in Devon, two of the most renowned and modern institutions of the time. Standards of parental responsibility were notably low. Angela recalled her mother telling her in her mid-teens: "From now on you must be free to do anything you want". What sort of thing? she innocently wondered. "Well, when you're older, you must have lovers. You're so pretty you should have heaps of them". As we will see, Jan Orr-Ewing's personality would deeply mark all his children, though perhaps in the best sense. For instance, when questioned about why, at the age of seventeen, she had permitted herself to be seduced by a man old enough to be her father, Janetta purportedly responded that she assumed it was "what one did".

At the age of fifteen Angela received a letter from her stepfather, Reverend Woolley, confessing his love for her. She always remembered the words “There, now I have told you” staring off the page in his small neat hand. On another occasion, during a picnic, he put his hand on her thighs (Angela “felt only revulsion, and later pity”). Although the affair came to nothing, it is something that must not only have affected her as a child, but also sheds light on the personality of the Hill 60 hero. In fact, neither she nor her brother were able to establish a good relationship with him. Angela recalled Mark leaning over the railing, attempting to spit on his head. She also remembered opening the bathroom door and discovering Geoffrey attempting to forcefully immerse his dissenting stepson into a chilly six or eight inches of water. In a conversation about their mother, Angela asked Mark if he loved her. Mark responded, “Oh, I love Jan, but I hate father”.

Having completed her school days and with the Woolleys preparing to move to Harrow-on-the-Hill, the initial plan was to send Angela to finishing school in Paris. However, Angela had different aspirations. After three uneventful months of learning dance and skating at the Palais de Glace, she proposed the idea of living in London and finding a job. At the age of seventeen, having completed her education and developed a taste for Porto flip — a potent mixture of brandy, ruby port, and a single egg yolk, which the girls were advised to drink daily as a tonic — she returned to England and settled into a room at Queen’s Gate.

In South Kensington, the realms of bohemia and the beau monde seamlessly intertwined. Angela initially took up a job painting various items like boxes, lampshades, and wastepaper baskets for a shop named Touch and Go. However, a supportive aunt encouraged her to enter the social scene and participate in the debutante events and court presentations in Mayfair. Consequently, she found herself with five evening dresses — white chiffon, scarlet chiffon, green taffeta, shot taffeta, and pale gold lamé — adding to the already crowded Queen’s Gate bedsit. In this elegant attire, or perhaps without it, during a discreet weekend in Brighton, Angela was charmed by a thirty-two-year-old House of Lords clerk named Henry Burrows. Nevertheless, whispers about her character, or the perceived lack thereof, had already started to circulate. A different relative felt compelled to explain that no decent man would want to

marry her “if you go on the way you have been”. Angela presumed that information about the Brighton escapade had become known, but it turned out that Aunt Florrie’s concern was simply that her niece should not kiss young men at dances, “or anyway not different ones each time. Nor at weekend house-parties”. After an unsuccessful meeting with the two aunts who had raised Henry, they eventually drifted apart. Angela then found herself in the company of a tall young man, potentially a second cousin, by the name of Ralph Jarvis. (“Generally I felt shy when I first met someone, especially if I liked them, but Ralph made it easy to talk, sometimes dangerously so. You told him things you had not meant to”, she recalled). Approaching her twentieth birthday, what were Angela’s aspirations in life? Where did her talents manifest, and which individuals did she find most enjoyable to be around? Notably, one of her closest relationships was with her brother Mark, a connection that Gerald Brenan perceived as perhaps a bit too intimate, as we will see. She had a fondness for painting, having attended life classes in Paris and enrolled at the Central School of Art. She even sold a couple of canvases. “And always there was her beauty and her highly enigmatic charm — D. J. Taylor says —, an eternal provocation to the young men she met at debutante balls to propose marriage and the bohemians and chancers she came across beyond them to solicit her phone number and an unchaperoned date”.

As her mother navigated the process of separating from her second husband, she could provide Angela with a spare room in her Battersea flat, used when she was in England (“without the Rev.”), but offered little practical guidance. Angela’s file of admirers revealed a lack of discernible patterns, with more coincidences than intentional choices. Winston Churchill’s nephew; a “golden-haired Russian”; a society gossip columnist; a French aristocrat; a downmarket major: it was all the same to her, and one of her most attractive characteristics was her lack of snobbishness. “Darling it does seem so funny to find you here with all these people”, her brother observed on one of these excursions into questionable territories where other Culme-Seymours would have hesitated to explore.

In 1932, at the age of 21, she was presented in society at a party at the court of King George V.

On 17 October 1933, Angela and Mark occupied a house in Yegen, Granada. He was 22, writing a biography of his admired Alfred de Musset. She, on her part, was working on a novel; she also wrote poems, painted, and played the guitar.

The property belonged to a young British couple living in Spain: Gerald Fitzgerald Brenan and Gamel Woolsey. He was a Hispanist writer, connected with the Bloomsbury Circle, a friend of Hope-Johnstone and Ralph Partridge, among others. There he met the painter Dora Carrington, with whom he had a troubled relationship, frustrated by her love for the homosexual writer Lytton Strachey; he also had dealings with Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry and the sinologist Arthur Waley, who would steal a few books from him on a visit, as was his custom. His wife, Gamel Woolsey, was an American poet and novelist. From a wealthy family, she moved to New York around 1921, where she published her first poem in the New York Evening Post. The following year she married Rex Hunter, a New Zealand writer and journalist, and divorced him four years later. In 1927 she met the writer John Cowper Powys, with whom she moved to Dorset, England. In April 1931, in Rome, she married Brenan, and from there they moved to Spain.

Two days after their arrival, Gerald wrote to a friend: "They sleep together, I haven't the slightest doubt incestuously". Be that as it may, he was enchanted by the brothers, and became obsessed with Angela. Before long, he reduced the rent to practically zero, and Mark was sure this was due to his obvious attraction to her.

However, in his *Personal Record*, Brenan says:

"We now, after a visit to Cape St. Vincent, set out for Yegen, where we had agreed to spend a few weeks with the Culme-Seymours. We arrived and were warmly greeted.

Mark was a very good looking young man of twenty-three with a beautiful voice and a rather flashy smile. He had taken our house with the intention of writing a life of his hero Alfred de Musset and for this purpose had brought out a large suitcase of books that dealt with him. However literature did not seem to be his métier for he never, I think, got so far as the first page. His sister Angela was two years younger than he was and just as good looking. She

was clever in a rather facile way — had learned Spanish quickly, painted recognizable portraits, played a little on a guitar and had written a novel in a couple of months in the manner of Gerhardie — but there was no great depth behind these attainments. Both she and her brother had thrown themselves into the life of the village and made themselves liked, but though Mark was much sought after by the local girls — one even came thirty miles to see him — he did not manage to have the kind of success he wanted because Spanish girls want a husband and not a lover.

Angela, whose slim figure contained a good deal of wiriness, was an athletic girl and so we took to going for long walks together. We would race down the hill slopes in a reckless way and then climb till we were completely out of breath. But although I could not help being attracted to pretty girls or, when the opportunity offered, flirting with them, I was determined never to injure my marriage by having an affair. I had chosen monogamy because I was sick of promiscuity and besides Gamel was a person so sensitive and defenseless that I could not bear the thought of hurting her. I therefore drew away from Angela, realizing how dangerous she could be to me because I found her so attractive”.

In another letter, addressed to Ralph Partridge, she claimed that it was she who pursued him: “I have stood a severe siege and come out triumphant”.

Although Brenan and Angela apparently had no sexual intercourse, the writer was far more affected than he was willing to admit. He read her novel, which he called “brilliant”, and promised to get a publisher; on their long walks, he told her more than once that she reminded him of the tragic Carrington. Brenan used to take Angela’s hand and put it in his pocket, and even climbed into her bed one night; but he soon withdrew, “before anything had happened”. Some time later, he confided to Frances Partridge that he had feared he was impotent.

After spending Christmas in Edgeworth, England, the Brenans decided to return to Spain at the end of January 1934. But then Gerald was transformed, and the flirtation turned to persecution.

They took a boat (and another part by car) to Lisbon and then, although he had fallen ill, they made the long and tiring journey to Praia da Rocha in the Algarve. "And when he arrived — wrote Gamel — with his usual terrific energy, he insisted on completely unpacked and putting everything away at once".

The initial cold turned into flu, then pneumonia. A doctor wrapped him in a thermogenic cotton shirt for warmth, gave him Piramidon and injected him with silver. For six days he flew a fever, and Gamel became seriously worried, begging the Partridges to go as fast as they could. They were to travel on 20 February, but in the face of Gerlad's insistent letters, which were gradually improving, they had to hurry. "Gerald's behavior was astonishing — said Frances —. The moment we arrived he was *frantic* to go — and did so almost at once".

The reason became clear on the way to Yegen. Angela was in London, and was due back shortly, though only for a week. Driving like a madman, Gerlad managed to get there before she left (in the end, Angela stayed for a month).

On 18 April 1934, Brenan wrote to Ralph: "Angela brought a flood of high spirits. She's a most charming young woman — no mistake about that — but you mustn't imagine I had an affair with her. No one is attractive to me in that way except Gamel; and if anyone were, she must have a darker skin and foreign language to draw me. 'So you're in a rut, it seems?' I am, and have no wish at all to get out of it. That is why the total effect of Angela was to make me more in love with Gamel than I have ever been before, but not to the disparagement of Angela for whom I have a different, almost brotherly feeling — difficult for a 1000 per cent he-man like you to understand".

Some time later, Angela returned to England, Gerald calmed down and things took their natural course. By October 1934 the Brenans were back in Yegen, and a year later they moved into a new house in the Malaga suburb of Churriana.

Around this time, Angela began a courtship with John George Spencer-Churchill, a descendant of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, nephew of the future Prime Minister and brother of Anne Clarissa, the famous Lady Eden. John, far from the world of politics, had

devoted his life to art, specializing in painting and sculpture; he also played the piano and composed, and in his spare time he wrote. She, as we said, was a talented painter, wrote poems and also worked as a linguist. At first glance, they were a match made in heaven.

In his memoir, *A Churchill Canvas: A Candid Autobiography*, John recounts the beginning of their relationship and their bohemian life in Italy, where they married in 1934:

"Following my unfortunate romance with Sophie, I had abandoned myself to Bohemian life and began courting a very beautiful and talented girl named Angela Culme-Seymour. She had long black hair and was natural, extremely gay, and clever. She could paint, write novels, and play any musical instrument she wished to study. Usually she carried a guitar around with her.

In contrast to the wild artistic existence she liked to lead, she could, when she wished, move with dignity in the highest circles. She was eminently wellborn. The huge Seymour family was ranged on her father's side and the Orr-Ewings on her mother's. Her mother, I thought, looked like a witch and dressed like one. She wore a huge black witch-type hat and a black cape. Even her teeth stuck out as if she were a character in an Arthur Rackham drawing. Nevertheless, she produced four outstandingly good-looking children, two of whom were by her second husband, the Reverend Mr. Woolley, V. C., chaplain of Harrow School. The strict Protestant upbringing Angela suffered from her stepfather proved to be her undoing. It made her prepared to do anything as long as it was the opposite to what he taught. The result was a most attractive personality with no scruples and no sense of responsibility at all. And she was very good company for an artist.

'Company' was the word, for if I had doubts as to whether she might make a wife for me someday, my parents had already decided she was quite unsuitable. My mother felt that any wife of mine ought to be a steady influence, which Angela certainly was not. Her family background was far from encouraging on this score. There was the famous story of her Grandmother Trixie on the Orr-Ewing side, who, on a train journey from London to Southampton with her two children and a nurse, suddenly got out at Winchester and never saw them again. One of the deserted offsprings was Angela's mother.

I was too busy thinking about my new commission, and how lonely it was going to be working in an empty villa, to concern myself with Angela's faults. 'Why not come out to Portofino?' I asked her.

'First I am going to Spain,' she said, 'but will probably be in Italy after about eight weeks'.

That would be May. In the meantime I went to Italy. I had a lot of work ahead of me. My painting was to cover the walls and ceiling of a room thirty-five feet long, twenty feet wide and thirteen feet high, and I planned to finish the whole area singlehanded in about four months. For my theme I took the story of St. George. He is the patron saint of the village; furthermore, the theme offered splendid opportunities for introducing interesting architecture. I always incorporated plenty of architecture in my paintings as an exercise in combining the arts. In this I was following the example set by Wagner, who combined the arts by not only composing the music for his operas but also writing the librettos, designing the costumes and scenery, and so on. I had shown my preliminary sketches to Sir Edwin Lutyens, who pronounced the architecture to be correct and in good taste.

My routine at Portofino was to work in the villa and go down to the town, to the Nazionale Restaurant on the quay, for my meals. The villa had a piano, and in the evenings I amused myself by pounding through Wagner. Lord and Lady Esher were living on the opposite side of the valley in the famous Castello Brown at the time and mentioned that they heard me distinctly, but politely refrained from comment. I suspect they became heartily bored with my constant repetitions of *The Mastersingers*.

No sooner had I settled down to serious painting than Mrs. Herbert wrote to tell me that an important Italian banker, Signor Gualino, had arranged to rent the villa for the summer and would be taking possession 'some time in May'. This was a blow. It allowed me only two months for the mural instead of four. I quickly rearranged my timetable and worked at night as well as throughout each day. On one occasion the exhaustion caused me to fall off the rickety Italian scaffolding onto the marble floor, which was a painful experience. Then at the end of six weeks came a series of distractions.

The first was Helena, a charming but voluble Polish actress, a naturalized Italian, with whom I had struck up an acquaintance in the piazza. She was a large type of woman in her mid-thirties, rather a heavyweight but elegant, with a rich voice. She did not speak English very well and was furious with me because I could not, and would not, speak Italian. I agreed with her that I ought to learn Italian, which is easy to master if one indulges in amorous pursuits, but like so many Englishmen I simply cannot cope with other countries' languages. My method is to bluff my way through by making a series of what I hope are appropriate noises. Even the Japanese have seemed to get my messages.

Helena's great pride was that she had declaimed poetry before Mussolini; therefore she insisted she must declaim to me in the great Hall where I was painting. She did — not that I understood a word — and in the evenings we strolled through the scented pines down to the sea in the moonlight. They were walks which she encouraged because she said she had quarreled with her engineer lover in Rome.

This interlude — and it was no more than an interlude, with lots of mutual admiration, artistic appreciation and approval in every direction — was interrupted by the arrival of Signor Gualino and his redhead wife from Milan to inspect the villa. When I next heard that Angela, complete with guitar, was on her way from Spain, I pushed Helena off to San Remo. On her way back to Rome she called at the villa and I had the embarrassing job of introducing the two women to each other. The atmosphere turned distinctly frigid, and I wondered what Helena thought when she left her promising Young 'd'Annunzio' of painting and music, who was so romantically sympathetic towards her deep emotional feelings for poetry and recitation, to the whims of a casual, lighthearted English girl. I was relieved to see her go. I don't like tensions.

Meanwhile I was having trouble with Signor Gualino. He was the proud owner of a collection of so-called modern Italian paintings by Modigliani and Co. and detested anything based on the classics, such as my story of St. George. To be honest, I was beginning to feel that the Hall was not really big enough for the grand conception of my design; the fantastic perspective vaulting in the ceiling seemed to sit on one's head. But evidently Signor Gualino enjoyed being blunt 'I do not like your painting,' he said tersely. 'Please leave. My wife and I are

moving in at once'. I thought this rather high handed, considering it was not his house, so when I came to paint the fourth scene, St. George being condemned to death by the Emperor Diocletian, what better model for the emperor could I have than Signor Gualino? I have not been back to the villa since, but there is a rumor that he was so annoyed he had the face scratched out.

When I left the villa I rented a flat in one of the fishermen's houses that are tightly packed, like a shelf of books, along the quay overlooking Portofino harbor. I argued with myself that since I was already deep in 'playing the ass in the gutter' [that was his father's opinion of his artistic career] I might just as well 'play the ass in the bulrushes' too.

I said to Angela: 'How about setting up house together? We are both artists'.

Goethe had done the same sort of thing, marrying only years afterward, and I could see no point at all in going to the bother of a wedding ceremony. I believe that when two intelligent people wish to live in partnership they do so because they love each other. This means that they are united in body and soul and do not need to abide by civil or religious ties. I know of several couples today who live as though they were married; some of the ladies have not even bothered to change their names. Because of the views which I hold, the reader might think it contradictory that I have had four wives. But we must never overlook human frailty, and as will be seen, my reasons for having had more than one marriage have been completely out of my control.

Angela accepted my offer at Portofino and moved in with me. We got on fine together. We laughed and danced, and everyone in the village was our friend. She became known as the Girl with the Beautiful Eyes. When H.M.S. *Barham*, the flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet, was anchored off nearby Rapallo, her captain, Admiral Sir Roger Backhouse, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, who knew my family well, invited us to see his ship. We were taken out in a launch. I climbed aboard in my black velvet beret and red silk-lined cloak, and cannot imagine what comments must have been made below decks, but as far as the admiral was concerned I believe I was acceptable. Having built a model of H. M. S. *Barham* some ten years previously, I

was able to tell him exactly what changes had been made to the masts of his ship before he took over. We celebrated with a great deal of Plymouth Gin!

Our domestic bliss at Portofino continued, but I noticed that Angela was dissatisfied. Feeling the need for security, she surprised me by saying: 'Don't you think we ought to get married?'

It seemed rather unnecessary, but on second thought I conceded that marriage has certain advantages. It is far more difficult for youngsters to live together in what is called 'sin' than for an older couple. For example, there is the awful business of signing hotel registrars and getting black looks from managers. And then there is the *wagon-lits* situation.

So I wrote to my parents and broke to them the news that Angela and I were getting married on May 13, 1934. The local *podesta*, or mayor, conducted the ceremony in the Portofino town hall with the writer Louis Wilkinson and his fourth wife as witnesses. No marriage, I suppose, could have been more madcap. It was a reflection of the irresponsible and rebellious mood that both of us were in. I was somehow pantheistic at the time and Angela was atheistic. When we were asked to take the oath on the Bible we refused.

'But you must!' the mayor insisted.

'We wish to make the oath in our own way', I told him. 'Will you accept that?'

'What do you propose?' he asked doubtfully.

'Break a plate on the floor'.

At this he looked even more shocked, but eventually he shrugged his shoulders and agreed that if we refused to act like civilized Christians there was nothing he could do about it. The only china laying around the town was valuable and eventually the poor *podesta* had to send down to the Nazionale Restaurant for one of their dinner plates. Angela and I received it from

his hands and drop it on the floor, where it smashed instantly, and thus became man and wife according to Italian civil law<sup>1</sup>.

We embarked on the most elaborate and romantic festivities imaginable. The fisherfolk and musicians of the town were so pleased and excited that they staged a sort of banquet-cum-ball in a little open-air cafe. We danced and were toasted until the early hours of the morning. Then as soon as we reached our flat and began fading away in a haze of Chianti fumes, strains of more music reached us. Opening the windows, we saw on the quayside below guitar players and singers serenading the newly married couple.

Truly it was a pagan wedding.

A short while later we moved to a delightful villa on one of the pyramidal hills of the promontory. Angela was very lazy in those days and did little about the house. We hired an Italian cook-housekeeper who shopped and looked after the domestic side of things generally. The time passed in an ecstasy of pleasure; our evenings were spent drinking in bars with the locals. The only blight on this idyl was when Angela revealed to me her conditions for our future life.

'You must realize,' she said, 'that I could never possibly *belong* to anyone'. I was a bit taken aback, having given her the marriage ceremony she wanted, but she continued: 'We can be man and wife. But my independence must stay'.

It was all extremely puzzling and feminine, but I was feeling relaxed, content and easygoing. I did a lot of excellent painting. A view from the villa across the bay I sold for twenty guineas. Dudley Tooth negotiated the sale and paid me, but said that unfortunately his client had never paid him.

We visited Max Beerbohm in his villa about two kilometers outside Rapallo, high above the road. It looked out across the huge Tigullian Gulf and was quiet and peaceful, a perfect setting

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<sup>1</sup> During the ceremony, Angela also threw a glass of wine against the wall, "to give a picturesque touch".

for writing and contemplation. I made a sketch of the gulf, with Portofino in the distance, which came in very useful later for a mural for Lloyd George.

Max Beerbohm was just as I imagined he would be, dapper and precious. We joined him on his terrace, where he invited us to take wine with him. His wife busied herself around us, fetching the decanter and glasses and making us comfortable while we talked about the many famous people, including friends of our families, Max had caricatured.

That eccentric writer Ezra Pound was a near neighbor, but we gathered he did not fit in with the rest of the local artistic community. He was very left wing, with a great red beard, a revolutionary type — a mixture of Hemingway and Bernard Shaw with a Red tinge; in short, a powerful fusion of violence of every kind. Max couldn't stand him.

Since I had told my relatives and friends in England about my marriage, some very generous wedding presents in the form of checks started rolling in. Angela and I decided to take advantage of this welcome windfall by seeing more of Italy. We went to Pisa, Florence, and then Rome, where we found a flat in the Via Calabria and ate in all sorts of restaurants: trattoria, rosticceria and pizzeria. Usually we gravitated towards the artistic-looking customers in these places and made numerous friends. One night we got extremely gay with a gang of artists and foolishly I mixed the white wines. Inevitably, this indiscriminate drinking spell disaster. Returning home sitting on the bonnet of their car, with all of us singing 'Giovinezza,' I began to feel ill. On arrival I was most definitely ill. My bed seemed to rock as savagely as a ship's bunk in a gale, but I crawled into it, utterly wretched.

Angela was so disgusted with me that she locked herself in her room for three days. I tapped on her door and tried to reason with her, but in vain.

'You were drunk!' she said.

She amused herself in this self-imposed seclusion by writing page after page in her diary, a lengthy day-to-day chronicle which she kept all through our life together. It was a frank and unashamed assessment of her intimate, innermost feelings about everything, including her

disillusionment over me. If I asked for a look she always tried to hide it away, and when I did manage to see it I understood the reason. The candor was quite astonishing. It was a shock to see my faults paraded in black and white. I felt I was reading about somebody else. There was a lot of unpleasant stuff about this not working out, and that not working out, which upset me. Being an idealist, I am unhappy when things fail.

My hopes for our marriage brightened when Angela announced that she was pregnant. The child, I thought, would anchor her to me for domestic reasons, despite her yearning for independence.

We went on up to Venice. Our hotel near the railway station was revoltingly dirty, but the city's great Tiepolo frescoes in the nearby Palazzo Labia and the pictures in the Academia more than compensated for the discomfort.

'Now let's go to Salzburg for the Mozart Festival,' I said. 'I have never been to Austria. We might even get to Vienna'.

Angela agreed, though the pregnancy was making her dreadfully sick in the mornings, and we got off the train at a charming little Austrian place called Zell am See. The village was clustered on the shores of a peaceful lake. I rented a villa and set up my canvases in a nearby barn to paint. Also I composed a considerable amount of music, Angela taking up some of the melodies and singing them to me. One of my compositions was my Grand March in A Major, played for my daughter's wedding twenty-three years later.

We had not been in Zell am See a matter of hours before Angela was strumming at the zithers and guitars in the beerhouses and we were dancing at the water's edge by moonlight. She craved further excitement, so a curious situation developed whereby I rented a room in a castle on the far side of the lake. I slept there. Then, in the morning, I rowed back across the lake for a dramatic, exciting meeting. Thus our days and nights became a succession of heartbreakng farewells and wonderful reunions. It was not my idea at all; the castle was full of bats and I hated the place. But Angela derived intense pleasure from the emotional ups and downs. I must admit that in a way it was quite fun, and a mild form of love expression

compared with some of the extraordinary things that other people do. I know a man who, when he wants to make love to his wife, sends her out for a walk in the street. Then he goes and picks her up as if she were a common prostitute. That, apparently, makes her desirable.

The landlord of our villa seemed to us to be rather arrogant and almost Nazi. Perhaps the village was a hotbed of Nazism, or we woke up one morning to find that a gigantic swastika had been marked on the snow on a mountainside. Next day Chancellor Dollfuss was shot. I do not particularly care for revolutions, and with a name such as mine I thought that the sooner we went the better. We packed our bags and left.

We halted our journey just south of Bolzano, after a distressing scene with the Italian customs. While the vast majority of customs officials are most courteous and efficient, I suspect that some of them like their work merely because it satisfies a lust for power. It was our luck to come across one of these in the Italian frontier. He was tall, slim and mean-looking, with the terrible defect of eyebrows that met in the middle. A thin bony nose dropped from beneath them. His eyes were deep-set, penetrating, and close together, and his teeth were yellow. Being a representative of Fascism, he had the right to say and do as he wished, and he relished it.

'What are these?' he asked in Italian, pointing at my bundle of canvases. 'We will have to impound them'.

On such occasions I cannot understand a single word of any language. I referred the man back to Angela. She explained to him that we had been through the same set of customs on our way up to Austria only a fortnight previously, carrying all the same paraphernalia, and that I was a painter. But it was no use. He insisted on seeing the paintings. So, with my cloak swinging, and watched by an interested crowd who had never seen anything like it, I rolled out the canvases along the platform for inspection. They included an enormous collection of murals, each about four six by four feet. The officer then started to be rude with Angela and pushed her. This was more than I could stand. I let fly with all the rude Italian I could muster and braced myself for delivering a terrific blow to the man's jaw. Luckily, when Angela saw

what was going to happen, she gave a shriek. I controlled my anger and missed by seconds a jail sentence for several months.

From Bolzano, Angela went on ahead to Stresa, on Lake Maggiore, to see her mother, and I followed two days later, making another of my separating-only-to-meet-with-joy excursions. There on the shores of the beautiful lake which had been the scene of so many of my romantic escapades in the past, I bought a colossal umbrella which enabled half a dozen of us to shelter underneath when it rained. It was the kind of brightly striped contraption that is fixed over a table in an outdoor restaurant, most sensible as regards size but rather odd to look at when carried in the street.

Together with my canvases, plus umbrella, we went straight back to Cromwell Road to see my parents. Our arrival was greeted with mixed reactions, particularly when Angela said that she thought she'd had a miscarriage. Everyone wondered whether we had started our child before we married and were trying to avoid a birth which would be officially premature. However, the local doctor — not our regular doctor, but his young son — was called and declared that without doubt it was indeed a miscarriage. Naturally we believed him, and the situation was followed by tears and psychological upsets. My patroness, Mrs. Aubrey Herbert, kindly invited us to Pixton Park, her house in Somerset, for a recovery spree.

Mrs. Herbert, apart from her charms and amusing disposition, had a disease which was very catching. I refer to her adding 'What?' to the end of every sentence. Ever since I first went to Pixton at the age of eight I have been afflicted by this abominable if harmless habit. We children would be sitting down to breakfast and tucking into bacon and eggs when Mrs. Herbert would burst in gaily.

'Good morning everybody, what? Have you got everything you want, what, what, what?'

Even at her villa at Portofino it was the same. 'Buon giorno, buon giorno, what, what, what?'

I am now hopelessly addicted to the habit, the same as hundreds of other friends of Mrs. Herbert's. Another of my verbal oddities, I might add, is a word I invented with my roommate

at Harrow, Brigadier Peter Barclay, who won what I believed was the first M. C. of the Second World War. We needed a means of giving vent to our feelings in moments of crisis without infringing decency. Accordingly we decided on: 'Firch!' I always like to test and tease people by using this imaginary word as an expletive. Anyone prim and proper is instantly certain it is dreadful and unspeakably rude. But of what it is onomatopoeic, if anything, I cannot think.

Directly we reached Pixton Park, Angela climbed on a horse and went for a long ride. She was a bit exhausted afterward, and no wonder. She was still pregnant".

By March 1935, the couple was eagerly awaiting the birth of their first-born child. "My father maintained that where doctors are concerned — John recalls — there are two maxims: first, always go to the best (which means the most expensive); and second, pay their bills promptly. The prompt payment of bills is often difficult for an artist, who relies on checks from his patrons which are seldom punctual. Nevertheless, I accepted parental guidance for once and called in a society doctor whose list of patients came straight from Debrett. He recommended a fashionable nursing home in Sloane Street. When Angela had been safely installed there, I rented a large room on the opposite side of the road and stretched out my canvas for the mural..."

It seemed that our infant would never arrive. I hung around the nursing home for days, until the baby was a fortnight late. Angela just flopped about, waiting to explode, as it were. On March 26 I was so tired of the delay that I went and had a bath. That, apparently, did the trick. The moment I started to soak the phone rang. The baby had arrived. A girl...

The folly of choosing a doctor merely because of the titles, orders and honors among the rest of his patients was proved when Angela failed to get well. Our doctor had been so busy rushing round to duchesses that he failed to clear her properly of her afterbirth. She had to go to the hospital for an operation...

My parents invited us to accompany them on a trip to Sweden they were making in July. We accepted the offer greedily; my wife needed a holiday after her indisposition. In the meantime we rented a lodge-gate cottage on the estate of Mr. Tipping, the agent of my grandfather, Lord

Abingdon. Relatives who visited us there have described our living conditions as ‘squalid’. I do not think they were quite as bad as that; it was just that things got rather chaotic. We pleased ourselves. The washing up tended to be ignored, and congestion collected in every direction. We were very happy during those months. Angela turned out to be a very reasonable cook when she tried, and I executed some of my loveliest paintings”.

Years later, Angela would say the following about her marriage:

“Johnny was gay and very sweet.

One night I said I would like to tip a jug of water over some Italians carousing under our window. He got out of bed and did it for me.

He was an admirer of Wagner, and played his music by ear, dressed like him in flowing black velvet cloaks and berets, and filled the house with enormous busts he sculpted of Wagner.

Johnny also used to get enthusiastic about painting in the style of Old Masters. For a long time he did everything like Botticelli.

Later it was El Greco.

His canvases often gave us customs trouble in Europe, because some of them were so like the originals.

He also painted lots of frescoes. I was an angel in a fresco for Lloyd George”.

After the birth of their daughter, Cornelia Sarah, the couple moved temporarily to Carthwell, Kent, where “uncle Winston” lived with the rest of the family. At the time, the future Prime Minister sat in the House of Commons.

John recalls in his autobiography:

“We went down to Carthwell, where my uncle pronounced judgment on the first of the next generation of our two families. He studied Sally for a few moments in silence.

'That one looks all right,' he said. 'I should carry on".

"Our room was next to his — Angela adds —, and we would hear him pacing the floor — sometimes all night — dictating articles and books".

Mary Soames, the youngest of Winston's daughters, recalled the couple's visit: "From my early teens I began catching up with some of my older cousins (although of course the actual difference in age between us was the same). Peregrine was kindly disposed, but always rather silent; he was Sarah's boon companion and it was only much later in my life that I got to know and appreciate him. But Johnny, his elder brother, was the greatest fun: the exact contemporary of Diana, and therefore thirteen years older than I, he was an *artista*, and in 1933 and 1934 he spent much time at the Carthwell, where his uncle had commissioned him to decorate with frescoes (in which genre he specialized) the walls in the loggia depicting the triumphant campaigns of John, first Duke of Marlborough. During his visits I came to enjoy his company very much: he was almost an acrobat, and I was amazed and delighted with his handsprings and somersaults, which he obligingly performed at my request. He was also very jolly and played the piano very well; I seem to remember that he was particularly fond of the Meistersingers. In 1934 he married a most beautiful girl, Angela Culme-Seymour. The following year, in August, they both came to stay at Carthwell, with their sweet baby of a few months — Cornelia Sarah. I thought them the most romantic couple, and I think I had my first perception of erotic passion from them: swimming in the beautifully translucent pool, I was showing off my aquatic prowess and approached Johnny and Angela underwater when I saw them kissing passionately — her long black hair was loose, and bubbles arose from their embrace. I was at once puzzled and entranced".

As we saw, John's parents invited the couple on a trip to Sweden:

"When she had gone [the nanny] we parked Sally with my mother-in-law, Mrs. Woolley, and set off on the trip to Sweden. It was the perfect example of what not to do in the way of an excursion *en famille*. My twenty-two-year-old brother Pebin and sixteen-year-old sister Clarissa were both equally gauche at this time. Pebin, who because of my mother's thwarted

ambition for a daughter had been made to wear long curls and girls' dresses when a tot, had only one friend of his own age in the world, and that with reluctance. He was not the slightest bit interested in other people. My mother used to tell me he was so impossible she was almost alarmed.

'I cannot get him to go to the cinema,' she said, 'let alone meet anyone. He appears for dinner, after which he collapses on the sofa, reading some book or other in deathly silence night after night after night'.

The war changed all that, but 1939 was still a way off. My sister was also bottling up her emotions on account of my mother's excessive fussing over her, which finally became so overwhelming that even Clarissa could not take it and she became more and more aloof, breaking away from home. I was rebellious myself, and sometimes wore my beret and black cloak, to the helpless amazement of my parents. And to add to our difficulties, Angela was actively asserting her independence after being possessed.

Pebin and I particularly enjoyed the stay at Tylosand on the west coast of Sweden, where we amused ourselves by damming up a river which ran down across the beach into the sea. It was about twenty feet wide, and the flow was sufficiently gentle for sand to halt it. The enterprise had a typically Churchillian flavor, reminiscent of pre-war days at Cromer. Even my father lent a hand in digging the main dam, and the successive reserve dams which eased the pressure. In the end of course the dam burst, with a tremendous outrush of water, but it was well constructed and created a sizable lake.

At night the family retired to bed quietly, but Angela wanted to enjoy herself, to be gay and have fun. She dragged me off to the nearest dance hall. She was so attractive that many of the Swedes wanted to dance with her, the customary procedure being for them to ask for my permission first, which I had the right to refuse.

'I bet you haven't the courage to ask for a dance with the most beautiful girl in the room!' Angela said.

I took up the challenge rather reluctantly and went across and spoke to the woman's escort. He gave me permission, but to my utter humiliation the woman refused. I was thoroughly put out by this rebuff.

The journey to Stockholm was made by canal. We visited the famous studio of Carl Millais, the sculptor, and I was interested to see the concert house and twin-spired church built by Tengbom. But the biggest impression was made on me by the city's town hall. It dictated much of my subsequent work. What appealed to me was that the architect, Ostberg, had toured the major town halls of Europe before designing Stockholm's. His creation is a sublime epitome of all that a town hall ought to be; more than that, he carried through the entire project with the conception of an artist. He even controlled the interior furnishing, down to the smallest detail. I have heard architects condemn the town hall as an anthology of bits and pieces gathered from here and there, but to an artist such as myself it is an immensely satisfying, complete achievement. I can name no architect today who has the mind or imagination to look further than his set square.

On our return to London, Angela and I took a flat in Sussex Gardens, W.2. Giving our daughter an airing meant putting her out on the second-floor window ledge. At the height of the summer we decided that we could not face an English winter. On the recommendation of our writer friend Gerald Brenan, we decided to emigrate to southern Spain. Gerald lived near Malaga in a small village called Churriana, with his American schoolteacher wife and five-year-old daughter Miranda. Accordingly, we booked one way tickets for Gibraltar on a Japanese liner. Our idea was to make our headquarters at Torremolinos, three kilometers from Churriana, and come back to England every summer to sell our work. We had no idea where we were going to live in Torremolinos, and the Brenans were the only people we knew in that part of Spain, but we set off cheerfully with our child, miles of canvas, china, linen, gramophones, books and so on. We also had a Scottish nurse, a large, buxom blonde of about twenty-one...

At Gibraltar I hired a lorry and loaded our gear into it. We set off for Churriana. Crouching amidst a mountain of swaying, rocking luggage, we had a very uncomfortable ride, but our

nurse did not mind in the least. She had only accepted the job because she thought it would be fun to join our menagerie.

When we halted at the Spanish customs at La Linea, I tried to make an impression with my beret, my cloak and my name; after all, weren't Churchills something to do with English politics, etc.? My announcement of my identity, though, was greeted by hoots of laughter. I could not understand a word of Spanish, so I made a lot of what I hoped were impressive noises and kept repeating: 'Churchill! Churchill!' It made the customs men practically collapse with mirth, which was most puzzling until an English-speaking Spaniard appeared. He broke to me the news that 'Churchill' or the phonetic equivalent in Spanish slang means something exceptionally rude and completely unprintable. At this we all had a colossal laugh, masses of handshakes all round and a *dopla* of Manzanilla sherry. We were shown through the customs with VIP treatment, and as we roared off in the lorry we saw the Spaniards still laughing and exclaiming to each other: 'The mad English!'

We passed through Marbella, which was then a small fishing village, and paused in Torremolinos at the bus stop next to the Bar Mariana, where we immediately celebrated our arrival with a *dopla* of Manzanilla. It is the best sherry in Andalusia: it is not overdry and has traveled only a short distance. In those days Torremolinos was considered a minor, undeveloped seaside place where Spaniards could go and relax. A few foreigners, including some English, were doing the same, and mostly they stayed at the Santa Clara, which had about the only hotel accommodation available.

When we got to Churriana, Gerald and his wife greeted us warmly. They escorted us back to Torremolinos and found us a delightful villa. It was called *El Rosario* and had a blue gate and door, and was sandwiched between the great tower — the tone — and the church. Our nearest neighbor was the miller, a short, swarthy man who lived in his *molinos* on the far side of the tower. *El Rosario* belonged to an old relation of the Larios family and the rent was about three pounds a month. We employed a servant named Anna who cleaned the whole house and cooked our meals. Her wages were only one pound a month, but as is customary in Mediterranean countries, we found ourselves feeding not only Anna but about ten of her

relatives as well. We would have for lunch an enormous chicken from which there was more than enough surplus for dinner. Yet when dinnertime came, and we asked about the chicken, Anna would open her eyes wide and say with complete sincerity: 'There is nothing left'.

I took up my work again with inspired zest. I decorated the entire house with murals in different styles and painted large allegorical and mythological subjects. In a very short time we made friends from the entire village. A local lad, Raphael Montes Sanchez, his ten brothers and sister Carmen used to come in and do odd jobs for us. At the end of a few months we had created a sizable English-speaking community. Lady Anne Gathorne-Hardy, a friend and cousin of Angela's, came out to join us. Angela's mother and half sister Janetta Woolley took a house opposite ours. Geoffrey Household, the writer, moved into one built in the cliff below us, and the American journalist Jay Allen and his wife established themselves further along the street.

But despite this company, Angela had another of her restless phases coming on. She strummed at mournful melodies on her guitar and wrote elaborate entries in her diary, none of which I was allowed to see. I was working at high pressure to get my paintings ready for an exhibition I planned to give in London the following summer and had little time for frivolities. We made one or two excursions to Malaga with the Brenans, who, knowing Spain so well, introduced us to some of the seamier sides of life in that big town, but it was not enough for Angela. She craved continual dancing and gaiety.

Before we left England she had visited a fortune teller who predicted:

'A great upheaval will be caused in your life by a dark man'.

'My husband?' Angela asked.

'No, not your husband'.

Sure enough, the man arrived, a dark-haired French count, le Comte de Chatellus, driving a fast two-seater car. Nobody knows — not even him — why he should have been in such a remote corner of Spain at that time. But there he was. And thus, in 1936, the year of the Spanish Revolution, the scene was set for a private revolution of our own.

The count quickly struck up a friendship with us on the beach. He came to dinner at our house and I treated him as a welcome guest. When Angela said she wished she could go dancing, and he offered to take her to Malaga while I made progress with my work, I agreed. I considered it a weakness on my part for any hint of jealousy to be roused within me; I put it down to youth. It is not in my nature to be jealous. I let Angela go — and was wrong to trust her.

Other developments were taking place elsewhere. My mother-in-law evidently saw fit to encourage the liaison. I can only suppose that she felt that a French count would be a more suitable husband for her daughter than a poor struggling artist. Unknown to our friend Anne Gathorne-Hardy or me, she put a private room of her own house at the count's disposal.

When the domestic situation became strained and tense I suggested a diversion in the form of a trip to Granada. It was February. The mountain roads were covered with snow, making it advisable to travel by train. The buses were regarded as risky; recently one has skidded and plunged over a cliff, killing the passengers. We had our third-class carriage to ourselves for half the journey, and played the guitar and sang. Then a gypsy got in with her infant child. It being feeding time, she opened her dress and pulled out a breast. But before allowing the child to begin suckling, she turned and politely offered us a drink first. Perhaps she was hoping for some of our red wine.

At Granada I visited the Alhambra and the cathedral, but Angela let me go to these places alone. She preferred to sit in cafes writing, unknown to me, letters to her count. On our return to Torremolinos the climax was swift. To the immense relief of me and my friends, the count announced he was leaving for Paris. Next, Angela said she would like to go and stay with the Brenans in Churriana for a while. I took her over there, innocently believing that the tension would die and we could settle down again. When we arrived she hunted through her luggage.

'Oh, dear,' she said. 'My jersey. I must have left it at home'.

I went to Torremolinos to fetch it. I got back to find Gerald standing at the door. Simply and matter-of-factly he said: 'Angela has gone'.

'Gone?' Impossible. She had mentioned nothing about it to me. It was the sort of dramatic desertion which happened in novels, or to other people; never to oneself.

'It seems she had no money,' Gerald went on. 'She organized this visit as a means of getting some'.

'And you gave it to her?'

'Yes'.

'But why?'

Gerlad shrugged. 'It was pointless to refuse. She was determined to go. She has taken the bus to join the count in Malaga'.

The date was March 26 — our daughter's first birthday. So this was the beginning of the end of my pagan marriage!

It was for me, furthermore, the start of a deeply spiritual period. I had never really been an atheist, or even an agnostic. As Father Ronnie Knox said to me at Oxford, it would appear that my disposition was more pantheistic and my spiritual life was found for me in my art. But fundamentally I have always been a Catholic, and once a Catholic always a Catholic. I regard the Church as a kind of spiritual 'hospital' where the 'doctors' and 'surgeons' are its ministers. Their job is to keep your spiritual life healthy, and they help in this by doing your thinking for you. What happens if you venture to think on your own? Well, luckily for the Church, most people do not trouble, and it is for them that religion is chiefly intended. When a Catholic has children they are automatically brought up in the Faith, and confirmed at an early age when they do not really understand anything. Looking back, I feel that my mother, who was more a philosophical or intellectual Catholic, considered I should be given the opportunity to think about and appreciate the great philosophy of Christianity as a whole, including the Greek Orthodox and Dissenting sections of thought. I was never confirmed.

In the eyes of the Catholic Church I was not married to Angela but a tremendous surge of emotion possessed me. I had a grand passion, a terrific fit of jealousy. I wrapped my black cloak around me, stuffed a couple of sharp knives in my pockets, and set off for Malaga, bent on revenge.

Anne Gathorne-Hardy accompanied me. We descended on the town with the speed and ferocity of a commando attack and searched every flat and room where Angela and the count might be staying. But it was no use. They had gone — to Almeria, further along the coast, as I learned from a letter she sent. She implored me to be patient, to wait until she had consumed her desire, when she would return. This request made me writhe with fury.

I decided to return to England, via Madrid and Lisbon, to get away from it all. Suppressing the anger that boiled within me, I replied to Angela's letter with an offer to start our marriage afresh. If she would come back to me I would forget and forgive, and we would live happily ever after. I suggested a meeting in Madrid.

*I will come, she replied, on condition that you let me go back to the count.*

I consented (what else could I do?) and set off for Madrid with Anne as company. Jay Allen, the American journalist living in Torremolinos, was already in the Spanish capital, where he had gone to try to sound out the restless political situation. I have always thought Americans are very good at taking one round strange places, and Jay excelled himself. He had his ear close to the ground and knew exactly which gypsy performances were being given where and when. He took us to a fantastically low nightclub where the shows were usually in the nude. Then in came a troupe of Gitano gypsy dancers, who performed magnificently with their natural violence. Tourists never see exhibitions of this kind. Details of the movements of such small, expert troupes are never published; the news is simply passed around by word of mouth. The reward for discovering one of their shows is Spanish dancing at its very best, in a dirty, crowded, smoky cellar with wine everywhere and a friendly, intimate atmosphere. Transferred to the stage of a big theater it is but a pale shadow of the original.

Angela arrived from Almeria looking obstinate and will-ful, and the three of us — Angela, Anne and I — booked rooms at the same hotel. We spent three very pleasant, strained days together. At the end Angela was still defiant. She insisted on going back to her count. It then became my turn to make conditions. Remembering the precedent set by my grandfather, Lord Abingdon, in similar circumstances, I told her:

'If you leave me, I will take on the responsibility of bringing up Sally. And if I do that, you will have absolutely no say in the matter whatsoever. But if you stay, I will forgive and forget and never refer to the subject again'.

It was a momento for deep thought, but infatuation triumphed over maternal responsibilities. I went to the railway station with her for a cold and unemotional good-bye. A few people have since said to me I was wrong to insist on bringing up Sally myself. Others feel I was right — including, I am glad to say, Sally".

Angela was reunited with the Count and they traveled to Paris, before she returned to England. The impromptu departure on a stroll with Count René de Chatellus, of the "enigmatic and uncompromising stare," was so spontaneous and perplexing that even six and a half decades later, Angela struggled to make sense of it. "He dominated me completely and I knew I would do whatever he asked me to. Yet I did not really want to go away with him... How could I leave Cornelia? And, in spite of irritations, and even if he was sometimes pompous, and I was not madly in love with him, Johnny and I had not been unhappy together", she remarked. Subsequent efforts to reconcile with Johnny concluded with a brief and tense telephone conversation conducted from a call-box at Paddington Station: "It's too late, Angela", he said, and coldly put down the receiver".

David J. Taylor aptly judges in *Lost Girls: Love, War and Literature, 1939-51* (Hachette UK, 2019): "Angela's early life was a succession of goings-away, of unpremeditated abandonments, of decisions whose authenticating mark is their complete lack of forethought. Contingency meant nothing to her and the oft-voiced determination to 'live for the moment' runs through her recollections like a vein of quartz through rock. If this chronic waywardness

had an explanation it seemed to lie in heredity. There was precedent for the deserted first husband, left behind at a bus stop in Málaga, and it came in the shape of her exotic grandmother, Trix Ruthven, a possible model for Nancy Mitford's 'bolter' in *The Pursuit of Love*, who, legendarily, stepped out of a train at Crewe on the way home from Scotland, leaving her children in the carriage with their nurse, and never came back. And always lurking in the background was that question of upbringing, the father dead in France and his earnest young replacement closeted in the drawing room for hours with her mother Jan. Angela's last memories of George Culme-Seymour were of him standing in the doorway of the nursery at Tedworth Square in his Rifle Brigade uniform, and the red and blue plush doll that was his parting gift".

Devastated, Johnny decided to return south. "My mother-in-law was looking for Sally in Torremolinos. The baby was in capable hands, and I considered I could return to England at once. Anne and I took the train to Lisbon, where we had a day or two of frivolity and night club investigation. Then we boarded a British liner which was on a South American run, calling at Lisbon on her way back to Southampton..."

Let us now see what had happened to Angela. It appears that when the brave French count heard I was after his blood, he crept out of their apartment in Almería early one morning, at an hour when Angela was asleep, and fled to Paris. Angela, undaunted, set off for Paris too, via Torremolinos, where she was able to borrow some money from her mother. She set herself up in the Rue Colisée.

On my way to Spain I called to see her, imagining that a reconciliation was possible, but she was surrounded by French and Italian noblemen, quite apart from various people of lower orders, and I had to give up the attempt.

I arrived in Torremolinos to find complications. My mother-in-law and Janetta had left for England, leaving baby Sally with the nurse".

# Chapter 3.

Janetta's early life offered scant clues about the bohemian realms she would eventually explore. Despite the recollection of a deceased aunt with artistic inclinations who had showcased her work at the Paris Salon, the Woolleys predominantly hailed from military and clerical backgrounds.

Janetta's somewhat irregular education came to a pause in 1936 when her mother decided they would move to southern Spain. During her early teens, Janetta's aspiration appears to have been influenced by Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*: "I knew my mother had taken out an insurance policy that would give me £300 when I was 21, and I thought I was going to buy a donkey and walk across Europe".

In February 1936, Jan Woolley and her daughter arrived in Torremolinos, looking for a nice, quiet place, free from the hustle and bustle of the city and tourists. Angela, her brother and her husband were still living in Yegen, 130 kilometers away, next to a beautiful Moorish tower. Mother and daughter visited and stayed in the house next door, where Angela introduced them to the Brenans. At just fourteen, Janetta was already having a devastating effect. On 15 March, Gerlad wrote to Ralph Partridge: "And there is Angela's sister Janetta, aged fifteen, who has set my heart on fire".

Shortly afterwards, and probably at the urging of the Brenans, a married couple traveled to Torremolinos to meet the women: Ralph and Frances Partridge.

Both belonged to the famous "Bloomsbury Group", an association of intellectuals, artists and bon vivants, including Virginia Woolf, John Maynard Keynes, E. M. Forster and Lytton Strachey. According to Ian Ousby, "although its members denied being a group in any formal sense, they were united by an abiding belief in the importance of the arts". Their work had a

significant influence on the literary, aesthetic and critical world of his time, and more indirectly on movements such as feminism and pacifism.

Working in a bookshop owned by David "Bunny" Garret and Francis Birrell, Frances formed good relationships with the local regulars: Lytton Strachey, Dora Carrington and Ralph Partridge, among others. Ralph had married Carrington, who was actually in love with Strachey, who in turn was homosexual and more interested in Ralph. An extra complication: the affair between Dora and Gerald Brenan. Carrington, Partridge, and Strachey shared a cottage, Ham Spray, where they maintained a strange love triangle.

Ralph fell in love with Frances, and they moved to London, visiting Ham Spray at weekends. In 1932, grief-stricken, Carrington shot herself dead, Strachey died shortly afterwards, and Ralph and Frances married. In 1935 the couple's only child was born: Lytton "Burgo" Partridge, named after the late Strachey.

On 12 April 1936, Frances recorded in her diary: "Walked to Torremolinos... Tea with Mrs. Woolley and Janetta and walked back". Mother and daughter immediately made a good impression. Jan was slender and delicate, and by this time her marriage to Reverend Woolley was definitely over. She was spending more and more time away from England, partly to relieve her asthma, and partly to take the children away from their father. Like any teenagers, both Rollo and Janetta found Geoffrey conservative and oppressive. And they ran up against the Bloomsbury Group's moral standards, i.e. their anathema.

Jan and her children had turned their backs on conventional expectations of what a bourgeois family should be, and for this they were immediately welcomed, in a kind of spiritual recognition. The couple were enchanted by Janetta "at first sight": she was charming, had dark blonde hair, blue eyes and long legs. She also possessed an unusual strength of character. She, in turn, was taken by Ralph, attractive and warm, and by Frances's intelligence and energy, but particularly by their spiritual elevation.

After two weeks of walks, picnics by the sea and long evenings in Malaga or Churriana, the Partridges traveled to Seville, tracking down the Woolleys. In fact, Ralph was considering

buying a house in the area. In Seville they were joined by Rosamond and Wogan Philipps, visiting the fairs, the Gothic cathedral and the Alcazar; Frances refused to attend a bullfight. They traveled to Madrid, where they visited the Prado, and from there to Barcelona, where they took a train to London via Paris.

At Ham Spray the little Burgo, according to Ralph, seemed "quite unaffected" by both his absence and his return. During the summer, Ralph and Frances worked in the garden, swam — naked — in the pool, and spent time with friends and relations.

But in Spain the atmosphere began to heat up. Earlier that year, the Popular Front had won the elections, leading to a first attempt at overthrow. The Chief of Army Staff, General Franco, ordered the declaration of a "state of war", but the measure was overruled by the head of government, Manuel Portela Valladares, and by the Minister of War, General Molero.

On 8 March 1936, a meeting was held in Madrid attended by several generals and senior officers of the Armed Forces, all agreeing on the need for a "military uprising".

The conspirators decided that once the coup had been carried out, a Military Junta would be appointed, presided over by General Sanjurjo, who was in exile in Portugal. General Emilio Mola took charge of the coup plot, and the instructions to be followed were drawn up. By the beginning of July the uprising was practically complete.

Gerald Brenan kept the Partridges in the loop. He claimed that they were still living quietly, while "every day in Málaga the Communists and Anarchists kill one another". In early July, three local landowners told him that an armed uprising was imminent. "If this rumor is true it is most dangerous". Brenan did not believe that the revolution would succeed; it would only generate a counter-reaction. However, he recommended to Ralph that "if you wish to buy a house here I recommend waiting till November".

The assassination of Deputy Calvo Sotelo in the early hours of 13 July precipitated events. General Mola took advantage of the commotion, and the following day decided to bring forward the date of the uprising to 18 and 19 July 1936.

On 18 July Brenan was in Malaga picking up his trousers from the dry cleaners. He bought a newspaper and saw that the army had mutinied in Morocco two days earlier. On the way to the café he heard the music of a military band and saw a group of people at the end of the street, mostly men, advancing along the Alameda. Beyond them came a company of soldiers. An officer marched in front of them, the men followed him with their weapons on their shoulders, and then came the band. Behind them the street was crowded with workmen, and others were advancing alongside the soldiers as they talked to them. Soon after, the sound of machine-gun fire and the screaming of women filled the air. Within days Malaga was in flames.

The rebels' advance seemed unstoppable. On the 19th Franco flew from the Canary Islands to Tetuan, the North African center of the conspiracy. Shortly afterwards, he wrote a proclamation expressing his support for the rebels, which would be continuously broadcast on radio stations sympathetic to the cause. Just opposite Malaga, General Franco and his troops were waiting to go into action. Paul Preston, the caudillo's biographer, explains: "He would conduct the early stages of his war effort as if it were a colonial war against a racially despicable enemy. The Moroccans would sow terror everywhere, plunder the villages, rape the women, kill their prisoners and mutilate the corpses. Franco knew this and had written a book approving such methods. If he had any reservations, they were undoubtedly removed by an awareness of the magnitude of the task facing him and his fellow rebels. Franco knew that if they failed they would be shot. In such a context, the army of Africa was an invaluable resource, shock troops capable of absorbing casualties without political repercussions. The use of terror, whether as an immediate or longer-term investment, was something Franco instinctively understood. During the civil war and long after, those enemies who were not physically eliminated would be undone by fear, nullified by any resistance and forced to survive in apathy".

"Half of Malaga is on fire". This is how Brenan was awakened by his maid on the morning of the 19th. "I went up to look — he recalls — Tall columns of smoke were rising from several

parts of the city. Two fires had been visible the previous night before we went to bed — now there seemed to be at least twenty”.

Trucks full of workers armed to the teeth and waving flags with the acronyms CNT, FAI, UGT, UHP passed in front of his house. His initial curiosity turned to fear when a couple of young men broke into his house looking for weapons, which they clearly did not find. From his vantage point, Brenan watched the Dantesque spectacle:

“A great cloud of smoke now hung over Malaga. With my field glasses I could pick out some thirty or forty houses that were burning. They were setting fire, I was told, to all the houses of the Fascists. After dark it was a splendid sight and we walked down to the church to get a better view of it. A small crowd had collected there to watch, but no one seemed to know any more than we did what was happening. Because the military rising had been suppressed in Malaga, it was assumed that it had failed everywhere”.

Confused and without any news, as he had no radio and no newspaper had hit the streets that day, Brenan decided to walk to Torremolinos and see if everyone was all right. For example, his friend Jay Allen had had a hard time: “...on reaching his house I found that he had left in a car for Gibraltar immediately on hearing the news of the rising in Morocco. He had been stopped near La Linea, narrowly escaped being shot as a Fascist and stuck into prison. His driver was wounded in the arm, but somehow had gotten back to Torremolinos and told what happened”.

That afternoon she also visited Jan Woolley, who told her about her and Janetta's ordeal. They had spent the first night of the war trapped in a flat, trapped in terror, until they managed to escape. Jan would make the following statements to the *Northern Whig*, recounting what she saw as they shopped in Larios Street: “I rushed into aide street. There saw hundreds of men, chiefly young men, dashing petrol over buildings, then setting light to them”. Brenan, for his part, would say: “...a workman came forward as a protector and tried to find them a taxi, and, when that failed, to procure them a lift on one of the armed patrol lorries, but none of them had any room. So there was nothing for it but to walk. Since the main road seemed too

public, they decided to make their way along the beach. But their adventures were not over yet. As they passed the fisherman's shanty town on the shore they were mobbed by women demanding money and did not get away till they had parted with all they had. Then they had to wade the river, but on arriving at the sand spit on the other side found it occupied by a herd of black bulls. This meant a detour inland to the railway bridge, after which they followed the line till they came to Torremolinos. Altogether a distance often miles on rough ground".

On 21 July, Brenan and Gamel returned to Malaga to get a first-hand account of the situation. "Half the houses in the Calle Larios were charred and smoking ruins, among these being the house over the café where Jan Woolley and her daughter had passed such a terrible night. Almost every house that was still intact had its balcony hung with red cloth. There were very few people in the streets and some of those I saw were not reassuring".

Some years earlier Brenan had had a natural child with a young Spanish girl (she was only fifteen), and the couple had decided to adopt her. In 1936, Miranda Helen Brenan was seven years old. Not knowing what would happen, they decided to keep her safe.

The governor of Gibraltar, Charles Harington, had good reason to ensure that the Woolleys were escorted safely out of Spain: although distant, he was Janet's relative. It would be tempting to regard the grand rescue operation that followed as a grandiloquent personal gesture. Janetta herself recalled: "My mother was apparently a sort of relation of the Governor and he sent a destroyer to collect us". Conversely, Harington held fervent right-wing views. Official bulletins from the Rock had already begun labeling the elected Republican government as "reds". Harington was resolute in fulfilling his duty to the British population in southern Spain swiftly and conspicuously. On July 25, The Times reported that a navy vessel was "proceeding to Malaga to evacuate 60 British subjects there". Meanwhile, the situation on the ground had escalated significantly. The Brenans' residence had been searched by an anarchist patrol.

When the destroyer arrived off Torremolinos, the "very smart motor boat" dispatched to evacuate the expatriate community was denied permission to land by left-wing activists.

Eventually, the Woolleys managed to take a bus to Málaga. There, accompanied by around twenty other British passport holders, they were ultimately permitted to depart.

Years later, Gerald recalled:

"Just six days after the military uprising my wife and I took our small daughter on a donkey to Torremolinos. The British tourists there were to be evacuated by a destroyer and Jan Woolley had offered to take her back and look after her till we returned. On our arrival we found them assembled with their luggage in front of the one and only hotel, the Santa Clara, which the place provided. The destroyer was lying off the shore but, being a warship, it could not land a boat without a special authority from Malaga, and that authority had not arrived. This created a storm of indignation among the tourists. 'Disgraceful! British subjects! How dare they treat us like this? What's the Consul doing?'

The middle-aged, middle-class women were the loudest in their complaints and once again I was made to feel ashamed of being English. Their utter selfishness, their inability to feel the least sympathy for the plight of this unhappy country, their concern for themselves and their possessions alone was nauseating. They provided a vivid illustration that this, the Munich era, was one of the lowest and most deplorable epochs of British history. Then word came that the embarkation was to take place, not that evening at Torremolinos, but on the following morning at Malaga. The destroyer began to move off while one lonely figure, Johnny Churchill, standing by himself on the beach, held up his hand and uttered the word 'Stop'. After this two polite young workmen from the local comité arrived to say that everything had been arranged, that buses would arrive within the hour and that everyone would be lodged free of charge in a hotel in Malaga, where the British Consul would personally watch over them. How well, I thought, Spanish calmness and politeness contrasted with the fuss and bad manners of my compatriots!".

Jan, Janetta and Miranda Brenan arrived in England via France, and made their way immediately to Ham Spray, where they were met by the Partridges; they remained there until the end of August. Frances recalled in her diary: "At fourteen Janetta was young enough to be

our daughter, but she also quickly became one of our dearest friends, and there was always room for her at Ham Spray". Miranda went to Frensham Heights Junior School and Janetta to the senior school at Down House School in Newbury, Berkshire.

In the meantime, Gerlad and Gomel returned from Spain and rented "a degraded villa" in Rouledge, Farnham (near the school their daughter attended). Janetta christened the place "Up House", as opposed to her school, "Down House".

In her book *Frances Partridge: The Biography* (Hachette UK, 2009), Anne Chisholm says:

"The most important result of the Partridges' visit to Spain on the eve of the Civil War was not political but personal: their encounter with the Woolleys. While Gerald campaigned, spoke at pro-republican meetings and worked on his book *The Spanish Labyrinth* (published to great acclaim in 1943), Frances and Ralph's life at Ham Spray expanded to include Jan, Rollo and Janetta. They liked Jan — it did not seem to trouble Frances that she became, briefly, Ralph's lover — and were always kind to Rollo; but for both of them, there was something irresistible about Janetta. When, before long, the restless Jan decided to return to France, leaving her children at school, Ham Spray became, and remained, Janetta's base, her English home. In Frances and Ralph she found a couple who offered her the stability, affection and sympathy of family life without the disadvantages. She went to Ham Spray for half terms and holidays; Frances advised her about her reading and her essays, discussed her wish to go to art school, and cut her hair. Already, rising fifteen, she was mature for her age; from the start Frances and Ralph treated her not as a child, but as an interesting, attractive character in her own right.

It is easier to see why Janetta was drawn to the Partridges than why, from the beginning, they were so drawn to her, and tempting to suggest that there was a gap in their emotional life that she was destined to fill. They were perhaps one of those couples whose relationship works best when it includes strong feelings, not necessarily sexual, for another person; and unlike the kind of love affair Ralph had previously drifted into, which excluded Frances, a quasi-parental love for a beautiful, strong-minded girl on the threshold of adulthood was something they could share. Instinctively, too, Frances may have recognised that the way to

prevent Ralph acting on the sexual attraction he was bound to feel sooner or later for such a girl was to build a strong, loving bond with her. The ways of friendship, like love, cannot always be explained; what is certain is that from 1936 onwards, Janetta became one of the most important people in Frances' emotional life.

All three Woolleys came to Ham Spray for Christmas 1936; early in 1937 Jan left for the South of France, Janetta went back to school, Malaga fell to the rebels and the Partridges went to Kitzbühel to ski. There, they met up with Raymond Mortimer and his partner Paul; they also befriended a ski instructor, Jenny, who later, with Ralph's help, came over to London (she was partly Jewish) and became his mistress. After Easter at Ham Spray with Bunny and Ray, their sons Richard and William, and Janetta, almost the whole of April was spent in Greece and Turkey, joining David Cecil and his parents, Lord and Lady Salisbury, on a cruise. While they were away, the Germans supporting Franco bombed Guernica, greatly strengthening the argument for intervention, but not causing the Partridges to reconsider. On the way home they visited Jan on Toulon.

For the rest of the year, Frances' engagement book is sprinkled with Janetta's name and school arrangements. In July, Ralph spent five days fetching her back from France; two days after he arrived home, on the 21st, they heard that Julian Bell, who had gone to Spain as an ambulance driver, had been killed. The tragedy of his death at the age of twenty-nine was not mitigated for them by any feeling that he had died for a noble cause. Frances, who had known Julian since boyhood, felt deeply for Vanessa and Clive, neither of whom had wanted him to go. Janetta and Rollo joined them for Christmas again that year, along with Julia, and helped decorate Burgo's Christmas tree.

With hindsight, the approach of war seems to have been inexorable during the late 1930s, and the hope that peace could still be maintained, as Hitler's demands increased, appears weak and deluded. But it is natural to want peace, to hope against hope that war can be averted; Ralph and Frances, during 1938, continued, like most people in Britain, to do so. The year began with Rachel and David Cecil and Colin Mackenzie joining the Ham Spray party; Colin and Frances had never entirely lost touch, and now that she was a married woman with a

child he found he could get on perfectly well with Ralph. He was still unmarried, living in Scotland in a beautiful house on Skye, which became one of Frances' favorite places. She and Ralph liked to travel in spring or autumn; that year the whole of April was spent in France, driving slowly through the Dordogne to Toulouse, eating well, visiting Romanesque cloisters and churches; for some of the time they had Raymond Mortimer with them, one of their favorite traveling companions, lively, energetic and with a great knowledge of France. Janetta was visiting her mother, now living in Cassis, and they met her in Montpellier; by this time, for reasons Janetta could not later recall, they were calling her by a nickname, Wolfers or Woolfie<sup>2</sup>. They lingered in Provence, where Frances hunted for wild narcissus while Janetta painted; they went walking and picnicking in the Luberon. By 1 May, they were back at Ham Spray for the summer, apart from short trips to Skye and to Wales, to give Burgo a holiday by the sea".

In late October 1938, Edward "Eddy" Sackville-West, 5th Baron Sackville, associated with the Bloomsbury Group, visited Halm Spray. On 1 November, back in Knole, Eddy wrote to Frances: "How I loathe getting home, after staying in a nice happy home! I must say I was considerably moved by Wolfers, as no doubt you noticed. I wish she would marry me — not now, but in a year's time, when she has got tired of kicking about in London. But I suppose she would never even look at me, and indeed why should she? I am old enough to be her father and what romantic qualities I may ever have had have long since left me. Still, one cannot help wishing for these things".

At just seventeen, she also dazzled Patrick "Paddy" Leigh Fermor, writer, historian and soldier, who was to play a decisive role in the Battle of Crete during the war. Years later he recalled: "Janetta has a marvellous fine-boned beauty which, when she was fifteen, smote Eddy Sackville-West so hard (in spite of his ordinary lack of such inclinations) it prompted him to propose to her. There is something magical and quiet about her; she had — has — qualities

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<sup>2</sup> Janetta's father clarifies this in his autobiography: "As children we disliked the custom of various people alluding to us as the 'woolly sheep'. Leonard, as the historian, was summoned to rescue us from this stigma. He finally reported that we were really wolves in disguise, as the name was a corruption of Wolf's Lea, and that our family came from the Lincoln fens".

that turned her into a treasured and lifelong friend. I can never help remembering that a distant ancestor of hers was a Lord Ruthven, anti-Mary Queen of Scots, who, though old and ill, got out of bed, put on black armor and, with several other suffering grandees, climbed the stairs of Holyrood Palace and murdered Rizzio, the Queen's Italian favorite, a friend from her earlier life as Queen of France. A grim tale".

Another notable person who met Janetta in those years was the poet Sir Stephen Spender, who was to be awarded the Order of the British Empire. Also, in 1937, he served in the British Battalion of the International Brigades fighting in Spain.

In 1981, he recorded in his diary: "After the funeral service for Sonia [Orwell] on December 17, Janetta, Diana, Dan Moynihan and I went to the Moynihans' house in Argyll Rd sitting there and chatting for about an hour before we were joined there by the contingent who had gone to the actual burial. On the road outside the house, Janetta said: 'I dreamed about you all last night. It was absolutely delightful'. This remark instantly transported me to an evening in 1938 or 1939 when we had had dinner together then walked along Oxford Street as far as Selfridge's clock — or just opposite, on the other side of the road — where we separated. But we needn't have done, I would have asked her to go home with me, and I'm always conscious of this as a kind of turning point, an example of my timidity which had not so much a decisive effect on my life as an effect of perpetuating my indecisiveness.

I first met Janetta in 1938 (I think) when she turned up in London, wearing a trousered suit of dark velvet and carrying a shepherd's crook. She was a dream person, and I lay awake thinking about her — fantasizing as they say, because I was still married to Inez and I did not think of having anything to do with her. She was a secret thought which I mentioned to no one except Cyril — and then only after the break down of my marriage.

A year later — the time of the Selfridge clock face glowing its ugly amber — she was still very attractive, but she had become the Janetta I've known ever since: not the girl-boy shepherd shepherdess but the mysterious elusive woman she's been ever since. To me she seemed to have aged; though what actually happened was that she had become ageless. After

that there was the war when I married and she married Sinclair Loutit. She remained the same changeless within a great many changes — marriages, love affairs — Humphrey Slater (but he was before Sinclair Loutit), Robert Kee, Derek Jackson, Jaime [Parladé] — her present husband, and her lover Andrew Devonshire — *femme fatale* (I suppose she must count as that, though I don't think husbands or lovers ever bore her any grudge)".

How could a teenage girl with such an appearance, carrying a shepherd's crook, have such an effect on a man almost twenty years older? However, as we have already said, the testimonies of those who knew her agree on one point: this girl transfigured them, and not infrequently, subjugated them. Baron, critic and philanthropist Arthur George Weidenfeld remembers her in his memoirs as "a wayward beauty who had been the Egeria to many remarkable men, some of whom she wed". David J. Taylor, in *Lost Girls: Love, War and Literature, 1939-51* (Hachette UK, 2019) comments: "No literary or artistic bohemian of either sex who chanced upon her in her mid-century heyday seems either to have forgotten the experience or to have been anything other than transfixed by her company".

Janetta's education abruptly ceased in the summer of 1937 when she convinced her mother to withdraw her from Downe House ("a very silly decision," she admitted years later. "I was very ignorant and [the] school had been very good to me"). Eager to pursue her passion for art, Janetta aimed to enroll at Chelsea Polytechnic. She soon found accommodation in the house on Warwick Avenue occupied by her half-sister Angela, now married to Patrick Balfour. Patrick, working as a gossip columnist, ensured a lively social scene, and Janetta, their teenage lodger ("half fascinated and half angry"), often joined their gatherings. The realization that some of these acquaintances had intentions beyond mere friendship likely dawned on her during an incident in the New Year of 1939.

At Ham Spray, along with the householders, they gathered Julia Strachey, Lytton's niece; Colin Mackenzie; Janetta and Jenny, Ralph's Austrian refugee ski instructor and lover. They did not bother to hide Ralph's frequent trips to London to see her; in fact, as was their custom, on his return he had told Frances about it. However, Jenny made a mistake: she sent Frances a present. This infuriated her, and may have been decisive in ending the affair. In late January,

when they all traveled to St. Gervais to ski, Jenny was not invited. The group consisted of the Partridges, Janetta and another couple, Heywood and Anne Hill.

A week before her departure, Frances fell seriously ill and had to rest. It was clear that she would not be able to go to France. She insisted that Ralph accompany the others; she would join them as soon as she could. According to the doctor, she would be better in a few days. Reluctantly, Ralph set off for the Alps on 25 January.

The couple had hardly separated after their wedding, and now they would be away from each other for weeks. Both felt guilty: he for abandoning her, and she for spoiling the trip. Still, he wrote to her from London on his way to France: "My sweetest love, I have been so beastly and disagreeable to you — do try to forgive me... as I'm going I shall try to enjoy myself". Janetta added a postscript (as Dora Carrington used to do): "Ralph is pink and miserable looking and I do feel it's all so awful your being left there... Ralph's in despair and I'm ready to burst into tears".

Frances wrote to Ralph daily, assuring him that she would soon get better and travel to France. At Ham Spray life was uneventful: music was played, Burgo built snowmen, and the two maids and the gardener were helpful; he repeated that his only wish was that he and Janetta would enjoy the trip. "I am so glad you have Wolfers to keep you company, because no-one could be better". He responded by telling her how much he missed her. "I am not cut out to go away from your side... without you I'm quite lost and hopelessly discouraged".

For a whole week, letters went back and forth between Ham Spray and St. Gervais. Ralph considered returning, but finally gave up. Janetta, meanwhile, had been skiing; she was fearless and making good progress. Frances followed international politics with concern. She wondered — along with the rest of the world — what Hitler's next move would be. She was also preoccupied with more trivial things: she kept Ralph informed about Jenny, to whom she sent money regularly. "I sent Jenny her check yesterday, pretending I could scarcely write. Oh my, wouldn't she have thought it was a chance for her to come in my place?". Jenny, she added, "was rather down on Janetta, who she obviously resents bitterly as her successor".

This comment suggests that Frances knew, and Ralph knew that she knew, that he was attracted to Janetta. According to her, Ralph sincerely wished that Frances could join them in France; but when it became clear that this would not happen, his attitude changed, and their relationship became strained and irritating. One night he came into her room, bathed in tears, threw himself upon her and told her that he loved her; this only embarrassed the girl. A scene similar to the one that had taken place between her father and her half-sister Angela. After that, Ralph returned to London at the first opportunity.

What Janetta didn't know was that Ralph complained about her in his letters. He told Frances: "I don't really get on very well with her. She's such a child and not a real companion... selfish, cross and vain, redeemed by occasional flashes of real sensitiveness and sweetness". She replied: "Wolfers appears to be irritating you — why, I wonder?". After announcing by cable that he was returning to Halm Spray, Ralph wrote a long letter to his wife unburdening his conscience. Janetta's behavior, he said, had become intolerable. "I hardly believed the day would come when I would want her to go away and stay away. You are the only person I can talk to so I have to pour out everything". After a long account of Janetta's moods and inconsistencies, he came to the point. "If I'd stayed another week W and I would either not have been on speaking terms or lovers, so it's a good thing from that angle too that I'm leaving. She's rather a cock teaser and I would have been worked up to reprisals".

Frances' only advice to all this is a line in her last letter before Ralph arrived at Ham Spray, dated 7 February 1939: "Don't be too cross with Wolfi. I dare say her position had its difficulties too". However, ten days later Janetta was also back in Ham Spray, as if nothing had happened.

"By all accounts — says Anne Chisholm —, Ralph accepted after this that Janetta would never go to bed with him. Before long, he also had to accept that his role in her life would be that of confidant and adviser when she found lovers nearer her own age; despite spasms of jealousy he played this part well. In the years ahead, Ralph's affection and understanding were of great importance to her; indeed, she often found him easier to talk to about her emotional problems than Frances. Being frail himself, he was more tolerant of human frailty. As for

Frances, Ralph's attempted seduction of Janetta in St. Gervais was something she acknowledged but preferred not to discuss. But if the three people concerned managed the episode with discretion, there was nothing to be done about the rumors that sped around in its wake. The Hills were great gossips; they would have talked to Julia; before long the story was and remained that Frances' anxiety about Ralph and Janetta had made her ill, indeed that she had gone temporarily blind probably as a result of declining to see what was going on. This version of events lingered for years. In fact, Frances' giddiness passed in due course and never recurred; it was probably just a commonplace viral infection".

When she was 19, Jessica "Decca" Mitford, one of six sisters of that name, met her second cousin Esmond Romilly, who was recovering from dysentery contracted while serving in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. They began an affair and decided to live in Spain, where Romilly worked as a correspondent for the *News Chronicle*. They eventually married, after overcoming some legal difficulties that were actually caused by the opposition of his relatives. They moved to London's East End. In early 1939 they decided to emigrate to the United States, and accordingly organized a farewell party for 18 February. Janetta was invited by Thomas Mitford, the only male of the famous dynasty.

Jessica herself recalled years later:

"Esmond and I got our visas to America, after the usual difficulties endemic to us, of dealing with consular authorities. We begged Philip [Toynbee] to come with us to the Land of Opportunity; sometimes he seemed to waver, but in the end he declined. I never quite knew why, until I read in *Friends Apart*: 'I couldn't confidently envisage a long adventure alone in the company of the Romillys. My personality, already depleted by guilt and loss, could have been obliterated in their tremendous company, and without another companion to support me against their undeliberate but crushing domination'.

He did, however, come to our farewell party held unsuitably in 4 Rutland Gate Mews, downstairs from my parents' house in 26 Rutland Gate, then left for Ann Farrer, a year older than I, who was starting her career as an actress.

'And as that party grew noisier and noisier through the night, Esmond was always hoping that the "Nazi baron" would come knocking at the door to make a protest,' Philip writes. He describes the assembled guests — 'all the odd strata of the Romillys' social life.' (Who were they? Of my family, only my brother Tom came, bringing with him a rare beauty, Janetta Woolley, aged perhaps fifteen — cradle-snatched, I could see — I think I did ask her how she ever got away; climbed out of the nursery window? Quite so, she said. She was to figure in Philip's later life when she was married to Robert Kee)."

In April 1939, Janetta was in Quimper, Brittany, in the company of her mother. From there, she decided to go to Cassis, a French commune in the Marseille district, where she was renting a flat.

Cyril Connolly, the famous intellectual, critic and writer, known to her sister Angela, offered to drive her in his luxurious Armstrong Siddeley. Although the first few days of the journey were pleasant, on the last leg they were forced to travel like two fugitives, after the police arrested him on suspicion of having kidnapped Janetta, in a situation similar to Nabokov's *Lolita* (although Connolly preferred the analogy with Verlaine and Rimbaud).

What was originally meant to be a direct journey from Brittany to Marseille became a magical voyage: Tulle in the north, Rodez to the east, Tonneins to the west, southwards beyond Toulouse...

In *The Unquiet Grave* Connolly recalled the journey: "For an angora pullover, for a red scarf, for a beret and some brown shoes I am bleeding to death; my heart is dry as a kidney... Peeling off the kilometers to the tune of 'Blue Skies,' sizzling down the long black liquid reaches of the Nationale Sept, the plane trees going *sha-sha-sha* through the open window, the windscreen yellowing with crushed midges, she with the Michelin beside me, a handkerchief binding her hair... Back-streets of Cannes: tuberoses in the window, the bookshop over the railway bridge which we comb for memoirs and detective stories while the cushions of the car deflate in the afternoon sun... torn maps, the wet bathing dress wrapped in a towel...".

In his book *Cyril Connolly: A Life* (Pimlico, 1998), Jeremy Lewis recounts the experience:

"A diversion lay to hand in the form of Janetta Woolley, a pretty and companionable seventeen-year-old, whom he had offered to drive from Quimper in Brittany to rejoin her mother in Cassis. Janetta, who was to become a lifelong friend, had met Connolly through her older half-sister, Angela Culme-Seymour, who was then living in Cheyne Walk with Patrick Balfour, to whom she was later married. Angela had warned Janetta, who was only sixteen at the time, that she had 'the two ugliest people in London coming for lunch': Janetta thought poor Jean [Bakewell, Connolly's wife] ugly and fat indeed, but she liked Connolly a good deal, and he subsequently asked her to the occasional party as well as introducing her to his 'best friend', Noël Blakiston, whom she liked, but found reserved and hard to talk to.

'I hope you'll have fun with Janetta, but don't get too involved,' Jean advised her husband: 'I feel Jan has some plan up her sleeve, that you'll be good for her daughter, or something'. No doubt Connolly, susceptible as ever, fell half in love with his elegant traveling companion, finding her company a relief from the warring demands of wife and mistress. In *The Unquiet Grave* he was to mythologise her as one of the three or four people he had loved 'who seem utterly set apart from the others in my life; angelic, ageless creatures, more alive than the living, embalmed perpetually in their all-devouring myth', but when writing to Jean he expressed suitably avuncular reservations. Janetta, he informed her, 'Is really very sweet though disagreeable in the mornings and only coming to life at sunset... I don't think in the least in love with me, though anxious to collar me as a scoop, and annoy Angela.' He enjoyed her company 'since she suits my "second adolescence" — but you can't help being very boring at seventeen.' All the same, he found her 'a very sweet and passionate traveler' who 'sits in a pile of maps beside me and directs in silence, by waves of the hand, like a conductor with an orchestra. We grind along atrocious roads, occasionally catching sight of *route nationale* warnings, but always going across them and disappearing into the virgin forest.' As they trundled slowly south, Connolly took pains to educate his companion, and got her to quiz him about France from his guide books. His French, as she remembered, was good but slow and pedantic; at some stage in the journey she offended him by saying she couldn't remember seeing Jean sober.

At Carnac they inspected some megalithic remains, after which they rowed out to the uninhabited Ile de Gavrinis, which was covered with asphodels and contained the grave of a Celtic prince. In *The Unquiet Grave* Connolly idealized this as an interlude of calm perfection before they headed south, to where the Furies were waiting and ‘happiness is thrown away’; he recalled Janetta’s ‘sad, grave, gem-like beauty and happiness soon to be thrown away’, and how ‘In black cloak with fair hair and Ingres profile appeared romantic love which I grasped and was not brave enough to hold’. Less romantically, Connolly was arrested a day or two later in Tulle, while he was being shaved in a barber’s shop, and accused of abducting a minor. The local Chief of Police asked for proof that Mrs. Woolley had agreed to her daughter’s traveling with Connolly; he advised them to leave town at once, and ‘for the rest of the trip, over the Massif Central for three days, we led the life of the hunted, never stopping anywhere where we saw a man in uniform, entering hotels like burglars... I suffer rather from having to enter hotels and book rooms with Janetta in her corduroys. We look like Rimbaud and Verlaine arriving, and I imagine people saying ‘Why she’s only a child, how could he!’, which makes me feel guiltier still and mumble’.

After they had reached the South of France, Connolly and Janetta visited the Luberon together and traveled around with the Quennells; Janetta wore a French soldier’s cape and carried her belongings in a red spotted handkerchief. By now Jean was in Paris and, according to Peter Quennell, Connolly telephoned her incessantly, receiving the invariable answer ‘*Madame n'est pas rentrée... Non, monsieur, Madame ne répond pas;*’ after which ‘we watched him descend the staircase hollow-eyed and woebegone, to spread around him an atmosphere of nervous gloom that slowly overcame our spirits.’ Diana [Witherby] had no desire to take part in such expeditions, preferring to remain in Cassis; and when, in due course, Janetta left for Toulon with Humphrey Slater — a writer and veteran of the Spanish Civil War, whom she later married — Connolly joined her there”.

While in France with her mother, Janetta was introduced to Humphrey Richard “Hugh” Slater, probably through the Brenans. At the time, he was ensconced in the city’s bohemian quarter with a painter named Elizabeth. Soon after, and to no one’s surprise, Slater was head

over heels in love with Janetta. Many years later, she would admit to having acted improperly. “Apparently when he was wondering whether he could leave Elizabeth I had said ‘If you’ve got any guts you could.’ Which seems to me an appalling way to talk”. And, indeed, Slater left his mistress. With Jan’s support (“I’m so glad you are with Hugh”, says a letter from early September, “I love him”), the couple moved to Toulon, where he amused himself by writing “letters to friends explaining how he’d run off with someone of just 17”. Money was in short supply. Sitting on the steps of the post office waiting for the cash to arrive, Janetta was surprised to receive a parcel from the gendarmerie containing the wallet she had lost on her way to St-Affrique during her journey with Connelly. Janetta’s account of this fugitive love story has a strange, impressionistic quality: taking a bus to Geneva; and realizing that the short, plump woman in front of them in the queue at the museum was Gertrude Stein; buying a Dutch cap in a chemist’s shop. She was extremely happy, she thought, “living with someone as fond of me as H was”.

Who was Humphrey Richard Slater? Born in 1906 in Carlisle, Cumberland, he spent his childhood in South Africa, but moved to London with his mother in the early 1920s and attended the Slade School of Fine Art. He excelled as a painter, and was described by his colleague William Menzies Coldstream as “a very gifted and rare artist”, although he would also be described as “multi-faceted eccentric and a man of secrets”. He went on to exhibit his works at Lucy Carrington Wertheim’s gallery in the early 1930s.

In 1929 he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, and changed his name to “Hugh”, which he felt was more in keeping with the proletariat. He worked as a journalist for the newspaper *Inprecor*, and at the outbreak of war in Spain, he volunteered for the International Brigades. He arrived on the Peninsula on 17 May 1936 and joined the British Battalion. He began as political commissar of the Anti-Tank Battery, later becoming its commander.

In his book *Into the Heart of the Fire: The British in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford University Press, 1998), James K. Hopkins says of Slater’s character: “That the writer Hugh Slater knew his job, there was little doubt. But his ability to understand and gain the cooperation of his working-class subordinates was severely limited. A Durham miner who had

been with the battalion from the start, and was described as a ‘good proletarian type’, was forced to leave the Anti-Tanks ‘because of differences with Slater.’ Another comrade in the Anti-Tanks, Jim Brewer, despised the young officer. Brewer had gone into the pits at fourteen but then took advantage of virtually every working-class educational opportunity available to him, including Ruskin College at Oxford, before volunteering for Spain. The former miner was one of the most independent thinkers in the battalion. One of his friends, whom Brewer knew to be a brave man and one of the few among the British volunteers who could speak Spanish, got into a political argument with Slater. As a result, the imperious commissar threatened to have him shot. In Brewer’s view, Slater had exhibited the temperament of a Danton or Robespierre. Brewer’s friend managed to escape from Spain, and in his farewell, said he had not volunteered to defend the Republic in order to be threatened ‘by a bloody fool like that’ just ‘because he dislikes my attitude.’ In its final evaluation of Slater, the commissariat lauded him as ‘a leader almost of genius’ but ‘with insufficient judgment of men’. In addition, he was not reluctant to seek his own comforts, ‘which had a bad effect on his unit’.

Tony McLean, who also served in the British Battalion, spent a lot of time with Slater. Echoing Hopkins, he described the officer as “very brave but extremely arrogant”.

Slater was eventually appointed Chief of Operations of the XV International Brigade. This included dealing with looters. One of them, arrested for stealing from churches and private homes, was Donald Perfect. In his bag they found a solid gold crucifix ten centimeters long, three gold ashtrays and a set of silver knives. Slater informed his superiors in the CPGB: “The usual practice in Spain is to shoot looters without trial”.

In August 1938 he returned to England. Some time later he went back to the front and visited Jarama, Brunete, Quinto, Belchite, Fuentes de Ebro (where he met Ernest Hemingway), Teruel, Seguers de los Banos, Aragón, etc.

Like many, he eventually left the communist party in disillusionment. In *Los brigadistas de habla inglesa y la Guerra Civil española* (Editorial Ambos mundos, 2006), we read: “His most famous novel was *The Heretics*, in which he made a scathing attack on communism. *The*

*Heretics* spans two very different periods, one during the 13th century in France, which featured the crusade against the Albigensians or the Cathar movement, labeled heretical by the Catholic Church, and the other during the Spanish Civil War. For Slater, both eras have in common the fact that the fanatical persecution of heresies is a recurrent phenomenon in history, and behind communist idealism lies the same ferocious and inhuman fanaticism that set the medieval crusades in motion. Both the times of Innocent III and Stalin are characterized by purges, betrayals, denunciations and executions preceded by forced confessions. The conclusion we might draw is that there is no great difference between the repressive methods of hatred and intolerance practiced by any authoritarian and intransigent system, be it Nazism, Fascism or Stalinism".

From Spain he went to France, where he was in early 1939, when he met Janetta. Not surprisingly, Janetta in turn fell in love with that handsome and brave soldier. The sudden shift from a life without plans, goals, or commitments to one filled with emotional and intellectual excitement marked a significant change. While some of Janetta's peers might have found her daily routine centered around Hugh's "talking, telling me what to read, telling me about politics, about the civil war, about writers and writing and painting" tedious, the seventeen-year-old recognized the importance of this didacticism in shaping her emotional connection. She acknowledged, "It all really interested me and contributed immensely to realizing that I loved him". However, amidst the captivating discussions on Hegel, Marx, and distinctions between revolutionary communism, there were practical concerns. The looming threat of war was becoming more imminent, and Slater, who had faced a month in jail in Perpignan en route to Spain, found himself on a police list.

The couple returned to England via Dieppe, where the hotel owners looked askance at the Woolworth's curtain ring on Janetta's wedding finger, and headed for Ham Spray. Janetta noted that "R & F didn't really like H. and their manner to me was different". Happily, Frances' appreciation for her young protégé remained intact. When Janetta discovered she was pregnant, it was she who arranged the abortion and covered the expenses. At the hospital, an

elderly, courteous doctor, who, Frances had warned her, looked like a frog, asked her if she really wanted to go through with it. Janetta did not hesitate.

On 1 September 1939, the Germans invaded Poland in a powerful joint attack by tanks, aircraft, infantry and heavy artillery. The whole of Europe panicked. The United Kingdom and France gave Germany two days to withdraw its forces. On 3 September, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand declared war, quickly followed by France, South Africa, and Canada. World War II had just begun.

# Chapter 4.

Angela Culme-Seymour did not neglect her love affairs either. She had divorced Spencer-Churchill in 1937 in a rather contentious manner, although they would remain friends for the rest of their lives. After a brief stay in Paris with the count, she was back in England. Before long she had won over John Patrick Douglas Balfour, a young aristocrat who acted as journalist and writer, then employed as the *Evening Standard*'s society columnist and an erstwhile homosexual. She accepted an invitation to stay in his house at Warwick Avenue: "I had nowhere else to go and what could be better... than to be with this kind, funny, sympathetic person?"

They were married on 11 February 1938, at the Chelsea Registry Office, and while the bride did not smash the crockery against the walls this time, she did have her Bedlington terrier, Boswell, among the witnesses. A somewhat makeshift air hung over the proceedings. "I suppose it's not very romantic, but I think it's the best thing for you at the moment", said Mark while drinking champagne that same morning. Later that day Angela and her "safe temporary husband" flew off to Paris to spend the first night of their honeymoon at the Ritz.

Shortly after their marriage, Balfour came into possession of the barony of Kinross. In her role as Lady Kinross, Angela was not only paid £100 to endorse Pond's Cold Cream but also remained conscious of her husband's career, and lived "a social sort of life, many parties where he might meet people who would be interesting to write about first nights, newly opened restaurants". Weekends away became a common occurrence, including stays at Madresfield Court with the Lygons, trips to Oxford alongside Balfour's longtime companion Maurice Bowra, and visits to Tickerage, the Sussex mill house near Uckfield owned by the Wyndhams. Angela openly acknowledged that amid these social engagements, there was a notable degree of adultery: "I can no longer remember when I first started being unfaithful to Patrick... It's difficult

to be monogamous. You fall in love with someone and don't look at anyone else, but the years pass and things change. I've never been married long enough to know for how long monogamy is realistic. I imagine about seven years". This reached a symbolic climax when she was called to Edinburgh to attend her father-in-law's funeral and found herself spending the overnight journey in a sleeper with her "very good-looking lover, a painter, called David something".

When the war broke out, she had a fleeting affair with a diplomat who held a post in the Italian embassy, until that country entered the conflict alongside the Axis and he had to leave. "We entertained a lot and did all the social things — but I found it boring and exhausting after the continent", Angela would confess years later. However, this marriage was not destined to last either. In a letter to a friend, in September 1940, Balfour says: "Meanwhile, my private life is at an end. I have discovered a whole host of infidelities by Angela over the past year or more, and I don't really see that it is any good going on with it. It seems she is incorrigible and perhaps a little mad. I thought I was going to be able to make some sort of job of her, but I see that I have failed, and that perhaps I could never have succeeded. It is time for somebody else to take it on — if she can find it on... I suddenly found — or at least thought I didn't love her anymore. I don't know what will become of her. I shall divorce her if I can get the evidence, but may have to wait until after the war... Thank God I am going to Egypt and a new life and interests. What a life. What a war. But I regret nothing. It is all experience"<sup>3</sup>.

She herself would give her opinion on the matter: "Our marriage officially came apart early in the war, when Patrick, who was with the Royal Air Force, wanted me to go to Cairo with him. I refused and stayed in England, serving in the WAAF".

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<sup>3</sup> Lees-Milne will talk about her in *Fourteen Friends*: "She had camellia-like skin of the softness of satin, and large glowing eyes of a dreamy quality, which smiled even when the lips were solemn. Often the only overt movement of her face came from long bewitching lashes, which, while intoxicating the beholder, gave her an air of complete innocence. Indeed it was difficult to tell how innocent she was or whether, like a small child, she was amoral... Commonplace codes of conduct simply did not apply to her... She was indifferent to money, luxury and jewellery and the high life... And yet she could not be accounted scheming, because her amours seldom brought her particular happiness and never material gain. She was like a ravishing cat with sheathed claws, a cat which happily settles on whatever cosy cushion presents itself".

"I wish that one day you'd grow up and decide what sort of a life you do want," Patrick told her at their valedictory meeting. In a letter to his friend Lees-Milne he said that although he was much more distant than he had been a few months before, he still occasionally felt waves of bitterness towards Angela. "She was like a cat who basked there for a bit enjoying the cat's prerogative, serenity without responsibility, and then slipped out".

But what kind of life was Angela looking for? Her aspirations for art continued, and she spent a brief time attending an art school in Suffolk. It was there that she met Lucian Freud, Sigmund's grandson, a young man with curly hair, a sharp nose, and darting eyes, who sat next to her. By 1940 he had a studio and exhibited his work in London on numerous occasions; she would continue to paint for many more years (an activity that Janetta would also pursue in her maturity).

She was dispatched to Kent for WAAF training, where she was once again thrown off course by an accidental meeting. Entering a Faversham tavern, she noticed a fire-fronted army commander whose Great War pilot's wings and long, polished boots "made him look as if he should be different or important in some way". This was Major Clifford Robert Alexander Hewer-Hewitt, who went by "Brasco" due to his military designation (Brigade R.A.S.C. Officer), who introduced her to the local bars, took her out to dinner, and soon declared himself to be "head over heels" in love with her.

Of course, Mrs. Hewer-Hewitt and her two kids didn't stop them. Neither their fourteen-year age gap (Angela had just turned twenty-eight, Hewer-Hewitt was forty-two). Already pregnant by him, she was photographed by Cecil Beaton for his *Ladies in Wartime* feature for the Tatler ("As beautiful as ever, a little bit heavier, perhaps?", Beaton remarked as the session began) just before undergoing an abortion at Golder's Green. After paying the £50 fee, Brasso promised to do anything for her and quickly vanished on what appeared to be a covert mission to France. Angela thought she would never see him again. Her WAAF training had progressed to radar work in the interim. Commended for her enthusiasm in her duties, she was moved to an RAF station in Felixstowe. Unpunctuated letters trailed closely behind her ("Come to me Angela come to me my darling love"). One morning after her night shift ended, as she was

getting ready to board the train to meet him in London for lunch, Angela experienced an odd *déjà vu* ("my thoughts were in a feverish turmoil, just as they had been on that night in a hotel in Malaga five years before, when I had unwillingly left Johnny"). When she awoke the following morning, thinking she was still in Suffolk, to her surprise she had eloped to a hotel in Maidstone with Brasco. This appears to have been a step too far, even for her. "Oh Christ! What have I done?", she records herself thinking.

The events that transpired have all the elements of a made-up picaresque, with war, bombs, fatalities, and forced relocation colliding. By now it was May 1941, the height of the Blitz, but Brasco was "very gay in those days. He used to do imitations of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton and the Marx Brothers, and the people used to hold their sides for laughing". He had some issues with her mother and Janetta because they perceived him as ordinary, and he responded accordingly ("they never saw this side of him, because with them he was stilted and wary and on the defensive. He said he knew what they were thinking: they were just waiting for the day when I would leave him"). Apparently, he had offended them by saying "pardon", "lounge" and "dear". Angela had to admit, though, that she had never seen him pick up a book. He was posted to Yorkshire shortly after their elopement, promising to send for her once he had located a place for them to live.

And so the roller coaster that was Angela's life during the war continued, with or without Brasco, sometimes she was content all around and sometimes she was living in conditions that were almost impoverished. After being billeted in Dewsbury and becoming pregnant again, she started working in a factory. "So what was it like being married to a posh Lord?" her landlady's husband asked, when her divorce case appeared in the *News of the World*. Brasco's military career was coming to an end when he was invalided out due to a leg injury after being posted to Scotland. A ménage of sorts was set up in the Surrey countryside close to Woking for a while. Jan bravely tried to work things out with Brasco but gave up and returned to London: "Oh darling, I just came to say goodbye. I don't think I can live with Brasco any more. So it's better that I should go". Past and future seemed meaningless to Angela, who was about to

give birth to a son named Mark, in contrast to the chaotic present: "Already I was learning to live in the moment, to look neither forward nor back".

Her relationship with Hewer-Hewitt produced two sons: Mark Anthony in 1942 and John Sebastian in 1945.

In 1942 Lord Kinross granted her a divorce so that she could marry her lover. "Patrick also wrote a book about me after we parted, and called it '*Ruthless Innocent*'", she recalled. Brasco's painting and decorating venture, which he optimistically started in early 1943, was funded by a loan from film producer John Sutro, who had attended Oxford with Evelyn Waugh, Balfour, and Howard. However, the creditors were gathering by year's end. "We have about 40 men now, all doing bomb damage repairs, etc.! But there still doesn't seem any money over to buy nice things with", Angela complains in a letter to Janetta from the summer of 1944. There were regular trips to Kensington Church Street's pawnbroker, and once more Angela "learned to enjoy the happiness of the moment and to put my thoughts in a sort of container, and to look no further than a day, or even an hour". Members of her family looked interestedly on. "Thank you so much for your news of Mark and Angela," Reverend Woolley wrote to Janetta early in 1945. "I can't help mischievously wondering whether Brasco has paid some of his debts". She gave birth to her second son in Cornwall on the day the war ended, after her ever-optimistic boyfriend had bought a trawler. Not long after, Brasco was conned by an associate, causing the business to fail. Angela had to sell her Persian lamb coat because the bailiffs were at the door and she needed to buy clothes for the kids. "I've never had any luck with fur coats", she said. "They've all gone, either in wars or revolutions or divorces, or else they've been stolen".

But let's go back to Janetta.

Faced with the threat of invasion, the British government decided to create a kind of urban militia for defense. On 14 May 1940, the Local Defence Volunteers, later known as the Home Guard, was officially formed. All men between the ages of 17 and 65, unable to serve in the

regular army, must volunteer. The proposal was enthusiastically received, and in the first week nearly 250,000 men joined the ranks.

Janetta was about to celebrate her twentieth birthday. The social circles she and Slater frequented were markedly leftist, filled with veterans of the Spanish Civil War. Much of their joint contribution to the war effort in the first year of hostilities was compromised by lack of money. The Devon sojourn came to an end when wartime regulations prohibited the transfer of the £10 a month Jan sent to his daughter through a French bank; Slater's income was also in jeopardy after his former mistress, Elizabeth, decided to stop subsidizing him. The couple moved to Bristol to work in an armaments factory, but their prospects improved when Tom Wintringham invited Slater to join the training center at Osterley Park. The company had the approval of a third Spanish veteran whom Janetta met in those days: George Orwell.

Wintringham had written several articles arguing that the Home Guard should be trained in guerrilla tactics. Tom Hopkinson and Edward Hulton, meanwhile, argued for the need to set up a private training school for the unit. Accordingly, on 10 July, Wintringham was appointed headmaster of Osterley Park Training School in Isleworth, Middlesex. Wintringham, who knew Salter from his days in Spain, recruited him as an instructor. Within the first three months he had under his command 5,000 men thoroughly trained in guerrilla combat.

The successful outcome of the Osterley Park experiment had significant consequences for Janetta's personal life. In an attempt to legitimize an organization that appeared suspiciously informal, the War Office enlisted the highly skilled Slater as a private in the army. He was made captain after a Labour MP called out the ridiculousness of this in the House of Commons.

Slater was also urged to formally establish a relationship with his teenage girlfriend. On December 6, 1940, they got married at the Reigate Register Office. Reverend Woolley, whose permission Janetta needed, sent a wedding gift of £50. Most probably, Janetta saw this marriage as a temporary arrangement. Some notes from early 1941, when they were living outside Dorking, mixes regretful household details and guests' comings and goings ("Papa brought apples and a mauve flower in a pot for Humphrey") with stories of trips to London,

lunches at the Café Royal ("Lucian Freud standing glumly waiting in hall for someone who never came"), and mentions of Connolly and his friends ("C coming here Saturday... met Cyril in Lyons. Went to see Peter Wattie... Met Cyril in Majorca Restaurant but Orwell didn't turn up. Peter Q did"). For Janetta, Connolly and Orwell were uncannily similar ("not an easy man to talk to, being, for me, in the category of people who silently inhibit one with a strong message that every word you say is unbelievably dull and stupid. Cyril, with his silences, was very good at this", she later recalled).

Janetta spent her days reading *Enemies of Promise*, "and thought a lot of it very good". This curiosity about the city's intellectual scene did not seem suitable to a relationship with Hugh, who lived in a community in Surrey and apparently spent his free time debating politics with Wintringham and his wife Kitty ("I won victory in supporting Orwell whom Tom is inclined to attack").

During the war, Lucian Freud had served in the SS *Baltrover*. As soon as he returned to England, he squandered the £23 he had earned. "Some of it was danger money: it was enough for me to take someone out for three weeks". Of course, that someone was Janetta Woolley. Freud went to the Slaters' cottage near Dorking ("it was being dismantled") and when Connolly lent her his room at Albany, in Piccadilly, she took him there, to the editor's fury as he had a crush on her himself. He also took her to the Dorchester Hotel to display her and to impress her, especially since his father had arranged a trainee position there for Clement (Lucian's brother, with whom he had a strained relationship). "I quite liked him being the waiter: he was rather a good waiter. Dressed in white he was OK. I discussed what the other waiters thought of him. 'Terrific', they said".

Janetta was already talking about divorce as early as April 1941. The same thought had occurred to Frances, who, she admitted frankly, had welcomed Hugh whenever he was brought down to Wiltshire for Janetta's sake, "while thinking him hardly good enough for her". In August 1940, Janetta and her husband visited Ham Spray, and he had heated discussions with the Partridges about their pacifist stance. "Frances' love for Janetta had not diminished — says Chisholm —. She was 'someone I am fond of and more closely linked to than anyone

except R[alph] and Burgo.' And her physical loveliness was a constant pleasure. 'She has the most beautiful female body I have ever seen.' In mid August Frances and Burgo, walking on the downs, saw four German planes roar directly over their house. Bombs fell near Newbury; Nanny spent most of the day in an air raid shelter".

On 7 September 1940, the Blitz began, and all hell broke loose over London. That night, 430 people lost their lives and 1,600 were wounded; many fled to the countryside. The Partridges took in two families at Ham Spray, one from Wandsworth and one from Bexhill. "With a sinking heart — Frances recalled —, I feel what remains of me being submerged under the tide of practical arrangements, just as it was last winter, only with infinitely more painful events happening". There is a glimpse of the couple when they arrived at Ham Spray for the weekend "to have a rest from the bombing" in late September 1940. Frances noted that Janetta "with the most remarkable candor and realism said that she felt far more terrified than she would have believed possible, and flung herself on the floor trembling all over". Six months later she telephoned to announce her arrival at Hungerford Station and that Hugh was in camp ("and it is horrible trying to live alone"). She also related a recent Fitzroy Square dinner party during which Cecil Beaton stood at the window, amazed at the air raid display: "It's too fascinating, too extraordinary".

The Partridges stay in touch with other Woolley family members as well. After failing to flee in the summer of 1940, Jan found herself stranded in German-occupied France. However, Janetta's brother Rollo, paid them an unsettling visit.

He had studied at Rugby School, first, and at Queen's College, Oxford, later. He matriculated in 1938 as a commoner, and took the pass moderations the following year. He was also a member of the Historical Society and of the The Eglesfield Players. In fact, in 1939 he took part in the second Torpids and Eights (rowing competitions that take place on the Thames) that were held. At the outbreak of war he enlisted as a pilot in the Royal Air Force. His father recalled: "Meanwhile my son Rollo was getting excited also at the prospect of going overseas. At the beginning of his training we had met in London on what turned out to be the first day of the Blitz. When we met all was quiet; when we parted to rejoin our units it seemed

as if all London was in flames. He made such progress in his training that he was kept on as an instructor". Indeed, on 28 December 1940 Rollo was commissioned as a training pilot.

In October, Rollo visited Ham Spray. From Frances' testimony we know that he had no illusions about the war, and no faith in politics in general. "From Julia and Janetta — Anne Chisholm points out —, both of whom were still Londonbased, Frances learned what air raids felt like. Janetta admitted that she was terrified, and that if it were not for Humphrey she would leave London. Years later she would recall: "People don't realize how strange it was to live in London in the war, with so many things happening and such uncertainty and desperation... people behaved very differently and recklessly and with a sort of abandon... because there was always a possibility that every single thing was going to go wrong". Her brother Rollo was now training for the RAF; when he visited Ham Spray in October, Frances wrote, 'the effect of his air force uniform was electric', especially on Burgo and Mam. Rollo appeared to have no illusions about the war; he told them he saw little difference between Nazis and communists. She was touched by his courage and by his confusion; Ralph thought that Rollo 'fully realizes the suicidal nature of his career. I don't know'. Both Frances and Ralph found the deliberately cultivated romantic image of the young fighter pilots suspect; Ralph especially was outraged at the way those too old to fight were always eager to send young men to their death. Many of Ham Spray's fiercest arguments revolved around this point, which derived directly from Ralph's own war experiences".

On November 30 he came a second time, shortly after he had passed his pilot's exams: "He touched both R. and me very much by his friendliness and charming manners and I suppose by the pathos of his position", Frances noted.

And on 28 April 1941, Rollo visited Halm Spray once more:

"Rollo arrived for dinner in his Pilot Officer's uniform. He looks bigger and stronger, and there's a peculiar sweetness in his expression. Janetta blossomed in his company and talked about her marriage, which to her 'was an unimportant ceremony and will remain so until I want a divorce'.

Tonight we had a conversation about the war. Rollo believes, in a *simpliste* youthful way, in ‘greater organization as a means to greater freedom’. He thinks the Nazi regime comes as near this as anything else. I was just wondering if he would follow this to its logical conclusion by thinking the war not worth fighting, when he said so himself. Indeed his position is an unusual one. He is fascinated by flying and by the glamour of danger, and excited by his own position as a fighter pilot and the world’s reaction to it; but he thinks the war a mad one which should never have been begun. Not sure whether he is a Communist or a Nazi, he is unusually clear-headed in seeing their resemblance. Janetta feels the war must be won, to protect the intellectuals for one thing. We all, including Rollo, asked her if she was sure the price was not too much to pay, and she disliked being put between these nutcrackers, and said the war might not — or she hoped it might not — involve greater slaughter”.

But Janetta remained the Partridges’ main worry, as usual. “Someone of whom I am fonder and more closely linked to than anyone except R. and Burgo,” Frances had written in the summer of 1940. It was evident that Slater was only a temporary solution, a runner-up in the elite emotional steeplechase that Janetta appeared to be entering at the moment. But who would take his place? Over the course of the next two decades, Frances’s diaries are filled with assessments (and, most of the time, heartbreakingly rejections) of potential suitors for her young friend’s hand in marriage. The standards were extremely high, and most potential candidates had little chance of meeting them.

Meanwhile, Janetta was searching for her place in a world where the virile, the heroic and the violent had come to the fore. She worked in a munitions factory, illustrated books and contributed to the literary magazine *Horizon: A Review of Literature and Art*, proofreading and approving or rejecting unpublished work (“Goodness the things sent in were dull”). She remembered trackless hours “putting rejection slips into stamped envelopes and slightly less abrupt ones into any more promising ones”. But, didn’t she consider herself a part of the *Horizon* team? No indeed. “I hardly ever went to the *Horizon* office, I mean truly hardly at all. I mean, I remember that flat and perhaps ate buns there, but I never went to one of their dinner parties or anything like that”.

Victor William “Peter” Watson, a collector and benefactor of the arts, had founded *Horizon* in December 1939. When remembering him, Janetta describes him as “delightful”, and laments: “in those days it was so awful for the poor buggers, you know, and he had the most ghastly time: he was always being robbed or something”. Soon after, Cyril Connolly was appointed editor-in-chief.

In his biography of Connolly, Jeremy Lewis says: “In July 1940 Peter Watson rented from a relation of Michael Nelson a seaside house in Thurlstone, in South Devon, and he asked Connolly and Diana [Cooper] if they would like to join him there and work on the magazine away from London. The Beach House was an ugly bungalow, full of draughts and banging doors. Peter and Diana ran the place and did all the housework; apart from shrimping in the rock pools, his trousers rolled up to his knees, Connolly spent his days brooding on the sofa, nipping up to London, and watching the air raids lighting up the sky over Plymouth. ‘I hear from Stephen [Spender] that you are beginning to enjoy the spectacle of conflict and stand on the cliffs with the wind in your hair and shrapnel pattering down around you,’ Peter Quennell wrote from London, addressing his old friend by Peter Watson’s pet name for him of ‘Squirrel’, and passing his love on to ‘darling Biz’. Visitors to Thurlstone included Janetta, Brian Howard and Tony Hyndman, and Michael Nelson and Lucian Freud came over from Dartington; with invasion rumors still doing the rounds, Connolly and the rest of the *Horizon* party were mistaken for German spies by the locals”.

Janetta recalled that Connolly once decided to tinker with a story — *This Mortal Coil* — written by Julian Maclaren-Ross, which was ready for publication. As the action was set in the army, the language used would logically have to be more barracks than parlor, but Connolly knew that the recurring “bugger” would cause problems. So one night, Peter Watson, Janetta and him made the long underground journey to Plaistow to edit the text. Although an air raid started as they reached the East End (leaving them “horribly vulnerable in that sea of railway lines”), and much of the route was in the open air, they arrived at Curwen Press with an indeclinable resolve to eliminate every last “bugger” in the 6,000 copies to be published.

In the spring of 1941, Connolly and Lys Lubbock, one of his secretaries, moved into a *maisonette* studio in Drayton Gardens, South Kensington, which they rented from Celia and Mamaine Paget, as both were working as nurses in different parts of the city and living away from home.

The new studio was spacious, with high ceilings, and was used for the reception following the marriage of Stephen Spender and Natasha Litvin on 9 April, which was attended by Janetta; Connolly; Sonia Brownell (future wife of George Orwell); Cecil Beaton (who took the photographs); the poet Cecil Day-Lewis; the philosopher A. J. Ayer; Rose Macaulay; Louis MacNeice, Julian and Juliette Huxley; John Lehmann; Guy Burgess (future Soviet spy); architect Erno Goldfinger and his wife Ursula; Frederick Louis MacNeice; Nancy Coldstream (who would marry Stephen's brother Michael Spender); William Plomer and Joseph Randolph Ackerley.

For most of their married life, the Slaters lived in hotels, something Janetta disliked. Janetta didn't like that the Slaters spent the majority of their married life in hotels. Janetta found herself drawn to the sophisticated London world that Connolly and his friends had introduced her to, while Hugh, who his wife suspected was drinking excessively, was becoming more and more engrossed in his military career, "restless and impatient". The Drayton Gardens *maisonette* was always alluring, as was her new friend Diana Witherby, who was now largely independent of Connolly and whom Janetta greatly respected for her "wonderfully clear and perceptive mind" and "great sensitivity". The two women were living together in a flat on Dorset Street, NW1, by the summer of 1941. One evening, Janetta recalled, Slater showed up to have the situation explained to him. He was a somber and quite touching figure, "without the superiority and arrogance which had begun to exasperate me".

A political development at the time complicated Slater's situation. One of the War Office's concerns was the presence of ideological elements infiltrating the forces, and Osterley Park Training School was one of the government's targets. The Inspector General of the Home Guard reported in July 1940: "While approving of the school in principle, the London District Assistant Commander did not think the Instructors were of a suitable type because of communist tendencies". And on 10 September General Sir Henry Royds Pownall

acknowledged to the Inspector General that “the school at Osterley was gradually being taken over by the War Office”. Consequently, as a precautionary measure, Slater and Wintringham were dismissed in the spring of 1941. According to Hugh Purcell, the author of *Last English Revolutionary*, Slater “was sent to an anti-aircraft unit”.

After the war, Slater was to become editor of *Polemic* for some time. He also wrote a novel about Soviet espionage, *The Conspirator* (1948), which was later made into a film starring Elizabeth Taylor, Robert Taylor and Honor Blackman. He married Moyra Sutherland in 1947 and died in 1958.

By early 1942, Frances could finally congratulate herself on getting rid of Slater: “The slight veil that swathed her during her subjection to Humphrey has floated away, and I am confirmed in my view that she is one of the most intelligent, beautiful and sensitive young creatures I know”. Come mid-May, Janetta wrote to her asking “if she could bring her new friend Kenneth for the weekend”. So, who was this Kenneth friend?

One evening in the spring of 1942, Dr. Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit left the flat where he lived with his wife and their daughter in Great Ormond Street and went to a Surrey village outside Dorking. One of his friends, Tom Wintringham (both were veterans of the Spanish civil war), was throwing a party and had invited him.

At twenty-eight, Sinclair-Loutit had a considerable career behind him — he described himself as “an ordinary but articulate young man”. Following his medical studies at Cambridge, Sinclair-Loutit joined the Marxist International Brigades and fought on the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War. Upon returning to England, he secured a position at Bart’s Hospital. He later married Thora Silverstone, a nurse he had met during the Spanish conflict. Awarded for his services during the Blitz with the MBE, he was at the time employed at the London Civil Defence Region headquarters.

Like many other young, left-leaning individuals in London, Sinclair-Loutit was acquainted with Connolly; they had crossed paths in Spain. When the war erupted, Sinclair-Loutit spotted Connolly strolling down Great Ormond Street while visiting his neighbors. At the party in

Surrey, Sinclair-Loutit's host was Wintringham, who was associated with Slater at Osterley Park.

Upon arriving at Wintringham's residence, Sinclair-Loutit found himself among unfamiliar faces. However, one woman swiftly captivated his attention, leaving a lasting impression on him even over sixty years later. "She was wearing white wool knitted knee-high stockings and she had straight hair, little make-up as well as an economic, accurate vocabulary. She was beautiful, and in her quiet manner she had an immense presence... From the moment we had met there had been nothing casual about our reaction to each other — it was an immensely specific conviction of our shared sympathy and necessity for each other. The only difference was that she was then alone and I was not". The girl was named Janetta, and was married to a man named Hugh Slater, but seemed to be "alone" at the party. From the instant they met, Sinclair-Loutit felt what he described as a "coup de foudre, a blinding impulsion", something impossible to resist. In his own words "what passed between us at that party had presaged, in its total ease and in the idiom and intimacy of our contact, something that I was unable to deny".

Ten days later, despite grappling with inner turmoil ("I had been sure of myself but I knew and feared the consequences of taking a road on which there could be no turning back"), the doctor decided to call Janetta, who was at the time living in Dorset Street, Marylebone. She immediately answered — Janetta later confessed that she had barely left the house since the day of the party — and his fate was sealed. Confronted with what he described as the "all or nothing" option, Sinclair-Loutit unhesitatingly opted for the "all", despite the personal and social repercussions involved in abandoning his wife and child. His decision unsettled old friends, who expressed their disapproval and concern. Janetta was widely perceived as a husband-snatching scarlet woman who was deemed unsuitable for respectable social circles. "You came to London, you lived with Sinclair-Loutit, you were asked to give him up but you refused", Diana recalled just a couple of years later, when divorce proceedings were underway. Indeed, Sinclair-Loutit acknowledged that his betrayal of Thora and their child was not only perceived as a personal betrayal but also as a betrayal of his political principles. He was seen

as a champion of the left who had forsaken his duty for the allure of an upper-middle-class seductress. Fortunately, the doctor was well-versed in Freudian psychology. "Many of those making this diagnosis were at least bourgeois stock and I realized that their reactions were best explained in terms of their own personal psycho-analytical state".

Soon enough, Sinclair-Loutit moved to 2 Dorset Street, next to Janetta. "I had felt a profound conflict before accepting that the separation from Thora had to come about — he confessed —. It was not willful hedonism that had been the motor for my leaving, nor was I completely carried away; I did indeed know what I was doing. I was reacting to a psychological imperative. Janetta had made me feel a new and different person; the price of this was the abandonment of what had been mine beforehand. It was a big price for a big reward". Janetta, for her part, admired her new companion's work during the Blitz, and found him "enormously practical and organized and brave".

As we said, the doctor's inner circle turned their backs on him: "The smallness of mind of people I had held to be friends-for-life surprised me but I had to accept that it is not always easy to stay friends with both parties in a marriage break-up... While I found all this hurtful, I also saw that such partisanship was giving an oblique psychological support to Thora for which I was correspondingly glad".

A mutual friend of the couple was George Orwell: "I had always regretted that Orwell never came to our house despite the friendly terms of his relationship with Janetta. My own sporadic meetings with him had never been entirely comfortable; the fact that we had both been in Spain at the same time should have served as a bond but, in our particular case, it was regrettably and un-necessarily divisive. He had fought under the flag of the POUM, as had John Cornford when he first went out. I myself did not feel that we had been on different sides, but Orwell's experiences when the POUM, the independent left, was being broken up at the behest of the Soviet CP, had made him suspicious of those like myself who had been in the International Brigade".

The couple's circle of friends included Connolly, Spender, Philip Toynbee and Arthur Koestler. In June 1942, Connolly, who was still editor of *Horizon*, published an article by Sinclair-Loutit: *Prospect for Medicine*. But he warned him: "The bother with you, Kenneth, is that you are too busy doing too many things. To write well, you must care so much that you let all else go".

Jeremy Lewis describes the colorful gatherings and parties that were held in those days at Connolly's: "Drayton Gardens was only a temporary home, and in May 1942 Connolly and Lys rented two floors at 49 Bedford Square, letting a couple of rooms in the attic to Peter Quennell. Moving house had been a terrible business, Connolly told Lady Astor, and they were still living by candlelight: but before long they were comfortably installed — so much so that, as Quennell later recalled, 'Cyril's household, in these wartime surroundings, was a constant source of wonder. He kept the war at bay more effectively than any other man I knew'. When writing, or re-arranging the cut-up galleys of what would eventually become *The Unquiet Grave*, Connolly sat in a wide-armed wooden chair belonging to Peter Quennell, who had had it made in Japan when teaching at a university there in the early thirties; a board was placed across the arms when an extra surface was needed. Roger Senhouse remembered that the rooms were 'furnished in much of the old King's Road style — the inlaid chairs, table etc.'; and, as in the King's Road days, animals were to hand, alarming the visitors and bringing comfort to their owner. Quennell recalled 'a lithe, beautifully spotted African genet, which had an awkward trick of refusing to relieve itself unless it was provided with a bowl of water'. Still more disconcerting was a 'white sulphur-crested cockatoo' which sat behind its master's throne; it flew at terrified strangers, but at Connolly's approach 'it would immediately sink to the ground, bubbling and gurgling an insensate song of love'. No doubt a rug was thrown over the bird-cage when one of Connolly's innumerable parties was taking place, such as that attended by Senhouse, together with Dick Wyndham, T. C. Worsley, Elizabeth Bowen, Raymond Mortimer, Diane Abdy, Janetta and Diana. Senhouse was handed a cigar by his host as he came through the door; Quennell was 'at the drinks, of course'; and Stephen Spender made an appearance in his fireman's uniform. Nor did Connolly stint his luncheon guests: ration

book allowances were pooled, and Connolly would take his visitors out for a drink while Lys looked after the leg of lamb”.

To the chagrin of many, among the first the ever-acid Evelyn Waugh, the bohemia seemed endless. Most of the people who made up Janetta's circle of friends had no qualms about calling a spade a spade when the circumstances demanded it. Sex was “fucking”; a homosexual “a bugger”; menstruation “the curse”. “A touch of commonness is absolutely indispensable, don't you think?” Barbara once said. Janetta also possessed a no-nonsense, abrasive side. Angela recalled an evening in 1942 when she, her half-sister, Jan, Bracco, and Sinclair-Loutit went out to dinner together. “Did you see me, darling, driving along in my fast open sports car?” Sinclair-Loutit wondered. “Yes we did.” “What did I look like — rather dashing?” “You looked an absolute shit,” Janetta told him.

Sinclair-Loutit never filed for divorce from Thora, who in the meantime had given birth to another child. At the same time, Janetta learned that she was pregnant and decided to adopt the Sinclair-Loutit name, even though she and Kenneth were not legally married.

At some point in 1942, Janetta enlisted in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and was additionally conscripted into the Air Raid Precautions (ARP). She was assigned to work at the Rising Hill First Aid post, situated on the boundary between Islington and Finsbury: “I went to Islington and sat in the basement of a school and was supposed to bandage people when they got hurt but nobody got hurt at all; I never bandaged anyone”. If this employment was short-lived, it was likely due to her discovery of pregnancy shortly after moving in with Sinclair-Loutit. As with Slater, discussions arose regarding the possibility of an abortion. However, Janetta ultimately decided to keep the baby (“This time something inside me had physically taken over”).

Frances reminisced about a delightful visit from Janetta in early November, during which Janetta expressed her apprehension about not being able to provide the best for her child and her desire to undergo childbirth without anesthesia, “which Ralph thinks unreasonable”. “Though surrounded by communist-minded young people, she still is (and I think always will

be) an individualist, and her packed life has made her more tolerant without melting a quite stern critical attitude. Individualism, criticism and tolerance seem to me the most vital human characteristics. She left us this afternoon, and we are very loth to lose her". When they crossed paths again in London a few months later, Frances was effusive in her admiration for Janetta's approach to impending motherhood. The traditional Bloomsbury mindset had never been particularly enthusiastic about the idea of younger generations disrupting the refined pursuits of their elders, so Janetta's resolve not to become an overly sentimental mother earned her enthusiastic approval. "One finds very few people these days to hold out against children and say they aren't suitable company for adults", Frances enthused.

Meanwhile, ominous signs began to emerge from Janetta's personal life, which would soon become fraught with turmoil. One such sign was Jan's return, after a journey from German-occupied France via Lisbon, "with no money and no shoes". This had a catastrophic impact on her already fragile health and constitution: "I'm so thin that I rattle in the bath, and my bones have actually come through my skin in some places", she wrote Frances, who commented: "At the best of times she looked like a Raemaekers cartoon representing Famine, so it's no wonder that everyone is anxious to ship her home in the first possible plane". Janetta penned a heartfelt account detailing her reunion with Jan at Paddington station: "Tall and very thin and very brown, with her characteristic slightly bent and awkward stance. Oh, how I hugged that thin body". She went to Ham Spray in May 1942. Conditions in France were dire, with scarce food supplies and street cafes devoid of beverages or cigarettes, yet they remained packed with people yearning for companionship amid the desperation ("I used to take a fan and fan myself, so as to have something to do"). Watching her depart after a second visit in August, Frances found her appearance striking, with her hair billowing out from under a small blue cap "like a young man in an Italian fresco", strangely poignant. "As she turned to wave one saw her fine eyes set in a deeply-wrinkled face; they have lost none of their beauty with age and even gain by the contrast".

# Chapter 5.

One morning in January 1943 there was a knock at the door. On the other side Sinclair-Loutit found two uniformed men who, without telling him, handed him a parcel containing the personal belongings of Harold Lindsay Cathcart Woolley. She knew immediately that they would never see Rollo again. Years later he said that the episode made him realize “how undeserved was my relative security”.

A year earlier Rollo had submitted a story — *The Pupil* — to *Horizon*, and when he learned that it would be published, it took up a whole page of his diary with the inscription: “MY STORY ACCEPTED IN HORIZON!” He also sent another story, *The Search*, to *New Writing and Daylight*, which was also published.

I transcribe below both stories, which, besides having literary and psychological value in themselves, help to outline and define the somewhat gloomy and melancholic personality of Janetta’s brother.

## “*The Search*

On the map of the island the sea is marked in pale wintry blue, whereas all lochs and rivers are coloured deep blue, with the purpose perhaps of emphasizing their position as landmarks in the green and brown contours of the land. Often during a flight when I have opened a map in the cockpit I have half expected to find this contrast of blues repeated in the country below — dark blue waters forcing their way into a pallid sea. But how falsely the map reads! It is the ocean that has thrust blue fingers up the island’s valleys, carving a rocky way through the island’s mountains; thirstily it demands the fresh rushing torrents that the rivers yield to the salt tides.

That was the impression I had on this morning as our two planes climbed out of the shadows, over the hills, towards the sea. We were flying in close formation at first, wing-tip to wing-tip, but when we started the search we opened out to a distance of some several hundred yards, for the search demanded all our attention.

What did we expect to find? I was not sure. Maybe a débris of wood and torn fabric that might have belonged to a wing or a tailplane, splinters of wood that had shrieked its way into the uncut corn, or dashing against a cliff head had fallen and scattered on the sands below. Perhaps only a wound in the earth, a burning of green grass. Or perhaps a patch of brown oil on the sea, a glassy surface sliding from one wave to another.

But we found nothing. We flew on long parallel courses beginning over the land and turning further and further out to sea. On top of the cliffs clouds still covered some of the higher hills. Often a hill or a fragment of white cloud separated me from the other plane, and afterwards I would see it again half a mile ahead, so that I would have to push open the throttle for a moment to catch up. As we came low over the hills we saw children run out of the doorways of the whitewashed cottages to see us; two horses raced up and down their field excitedly; some men and women digging paused in their work and looked up; someone waved. But we were intruders in their morning; what could they understand of our search? Down on the land it was very cool and still, with the stillness of early morning. I could feel this stillness in every sign of the disturbance we made, the frightened horses and the faces looking upwards. In spite of the noise of the engine I could sense this stillness as closely as if I was with them on the ground. There was no debris to be seen, no black wound in the earth; and for the moment I forgot what we were searching for — it might have been a castle or a village, or even something very small and precious, a rare flower, say, or a lost ring.

'Spread out a bit more, Black Two,' said Ronnie's voice over the R. T.

'Okay, Black One,' I said.

'Turning now, Black Two.'

Over the sea we could fly lower, about two hundred feet, and we kept on a course from the mouth of the loch to the black rocks off the western shore of the island, turning out to sea each time. The sea was very calm. Only off the rocks were there white wave crests, the waves dancing and jostling with each other for room where a shore current crossed the tide. There were no boats off this part of the coast. I think the war had stopped most of the island's fishing. But far out to sea a long line of ships was sailing in convoy, and they took no notice of us when we approached them. I felt angry at their complete unconcern for our search. Then I wished that we had been looking for a lost schooner which we might have found drifting helplessly with broken masts, and its position would be reported and everything would be all right. (Was it after all a schooner which we were seeking?) We continued to look ceaselessly over the glittering water surface, our eyes become sore with the sea's brightness. And each time I came across a dark patch I would circle round carefully until I recognized it as a mass of seaweed or an abandoned barrel rocking on the waves...

Then we were recalled. 'Return to base, Black section,' said the voice from the land. Soon we were back at the aerodrome again, taxiing round the perimeter track to dispersal.

'No luck?' asked the flight riggers, pushing the plane back into its bay.

'Did you see anything?' people asked us over the telephone.

What did they expect us to find? No, we had seen nothing. All our lives we had been searching and had found nothing. Only the whitewashed cottages and some strands of seaweed. Only some fragments of cloud and the blueness of the sea. Only the blueness of the empty glittering waves. I felt too weary to remember the original object of our search. Certainly it had been quite clear a little while ago: a plane was missing: one of our pilots had not returned. But that was only the previous night, and surely we had been searching for longer than that? Ages and ages before we had begun the search, and now an accident had happened to remind us that we must continue to look. We had even merited this new loss because we had become too indolent or ill-directed in our searching. And tomorrow or the next day, or maybe much later, we would have to set out anew".

*"The Pupil*

There was no wind. The windsock was an empty sleeve hanging limp and lifeless from its post. Smoke from the two factory chimneys rose in slender columns into the great basin of hazy sky. It was one of those summer afternoons when one has to climb up through a few thousand feet of sultry haze before reaching the clear sky, and then the haze turns into a black circle of horizon round a dome of lucid blue. Below, the haze clouds look like watery ghosts, blurred pre-natal shapes, but above it they curve and curl into clear white lines, forming miniature ranges of white sky mountains.

On the edge of the aerodrome the pupil lay on his back shielding his eyes from the sun. He watched the little training aeroplanes flying overhead as they made their approach into wind, some floating down so gently and gracefully that they ended just skimming the top of the grass, while others foundered with sudden indignant bursts of engine as if they were afraid to land. Occasionally the pupil looked up to anticipate a doubtful landing; sometimes he sat up to scan the field for any sign of his flying instructor, only to fall back again on to his couch of parachute and sandbags. Planes kept drawing up and new pupils clambered in and out of the back cockpit. Slowly the old men reached up to swing the propellers, stepping warily aside to avoid the sudden flashing whirl of blades. Again and again their hoarse voices repeated the familiar ritual: petrol on, switches off, throttle closed. Contact, Contact! The afternoon crept on to the usual sequence of planes arriving and waiting and taxiing away. The petrol wagon shuffled along for refuelling; the Naafi car came, bringing cups of murky tea and little round cakes. The sun moved slowly round over the camouflaged hangar roofs and every now and then breaths of cooler air disturbed the slender stems of smoke. Aeroplanes continued to follow each other round and round like noisy scurrying insects.

The pupil was asleep when his instructor came; he opened his eyes to see a helmet swung mockingly over his face and the instructor in his black flying suit towering over him like a black shadow.

'Get up,' he said, 'you've got to fly'.

The instructor threw off his parachute and sat down on the sandbags; he began fumbling in a pocket, chucking out maps and matches and old letters and bits of paper; then he lit a cigarette and smoothed out a piece of paper.

'Got a pencil?' he said. 'You've got about an hour. But get her filled up first.'

The pupil stood rubbing his eyes, a little dizzy with heat and sleep.

'Yes, sir,' he said. The instructor was writing something on the slip of paper. He glanced casually up at the sky.

'Still all right for a spot of aerobatics I should think. Anyhow you can climb up and see. Try and get in number ten and twenty-two will you?'

'Okay, sir,' said the pupil. He bent down to sign the paper.

'Bring her back and put her on pickets, sir?'

The instructor nodded.

The pupil smiled and walked over to his plane. It had just been refuelled and one of the old swinger men was shoving chocks in front of the wheels. Switches off. Contact. 'Contact!' he shouted back. It started up easily, sending a cool gush of air playing round the pupil's head, ruffling the grass behind. He felt refreshed and eager to fly up through this heaviness of yellow haze, like a swimmer waiting to dive into the clear water of a pool.

It was soon after six o'clock when the pupil left the ground. The plane climbed with a comfortable humming sound, and he touched back on the stick with small jerks of the fingers to feel its power of lift, seeing the nose of the plane leap up and down responsively. From the rear cockpit the wings seemed to him separate entities which could roll and twist as if by some mysterious understanding. Still climbing he raised each wing gently in turn to convince himself of their obedience, rather as one calls or beckons to some perfectly trained animal. He kicked

viciously at the rudder to enjoy the gusts of wind tearing at his face. He was the master, the supreme commander, alone: this, he thought, is the real thrill of flying solo, this huge power contained like magic in the palm of one's hand...

Already he had escaped the tiresome ring of planes circuiting the aerodrome, and setting the throttle he trimmed her to climb steadily up; he could take his hands off the controls and let the plane lift him with a rich throb of engine higher and higher into the haze. The haze caught the light like the dust swimming in shafts of sunlight that slant through close shutters. Only things yellow and orange coloured stood out in it; here and there he could recognize a new house being built or shining yellow fields of corn. The pupil climbed on confidently, knowing that he was flying over familiar country.

At three thousand feet he was emerging into clearer sky and the ground sank away uncertainty in colourless depth below. A layer of cumulus cloud floated above the sea of haze, presenting rows of white beads strung out from horizon to horizon. He searched for gaps between those white clouds, and climbed on higher and higher, circling round the cloud bases. The sun shone dazzlingly bright in an emerald ceiling of sky; just a tip, a tiny segment, was cut by the dark edge of haze, and where this tip touched it began to turn into a long streak of gold.

The pupil sang as he climbed. He felt himself the only thing moving in this empty bowl of sky, the only being living in its blue clarity. This sense of freedom is so exhilarating that the pilot feels he must turn and dive and spin to accompany his singing and so assert his presence in this vast loneliness: he has to boast to the earth that he is above it, for all who love flying seek to achieve freedom from its shapes and shadows, escaping the rigidity and the permanence of the land. The music of the sky has the freedom of all space and the relentless rhythm of all time. So locking the slots the pupil braced himself in his straps and dived. At seven thousand feet he had plenty of height to spare. He looped, he turned on the stall, reaching into the depths of sky and rushing down in effortless sweeping circles... He tried rolling the plane: again and again he poised the nose delicately on the cloud horizon and eased her slowly, deliberately round. He imagined the instructor commenting, correcting, shouting

down the speaking tube. But there was only the blurred droning of the engine in his ears, and he whispered to himself, 'Lovely... Christ, how lovely!"

As he glided down, the pupil leant over the side scanning the country below him, hoping to find some familiar landmark. He could pick out the blue smoke of a village on the edge of some woods, and imagining he had drifted a bit to the north while doing aerobatics, he turned south. He opened a map and looked on it for the woods, but he thought that they were perhaps too small to show up. It was impossible to see far to the right now because the sun was a rose red glow in the haze. A pink ribbon of canal caught the light and he followed it gratefully, turning from side to side uncertainty in search of a town. He was flying over flat fields in which cattle grazed peacefully. Late harvesters were finishing work, he could see their black coats bicycling in twos and threes down the lanes. He was flying lower to see more clearly; some children waved to him from a haystack and he waved back, refusing to admit to himself that he was beginning to feel lost and afraid. He tried to calculate how far away he could have flown in an hour, for already he was due down at the aerodrome. Presently he came across a fair-sized landing ground where some bombers were revving up in preparation for night flying; a cheerful blaze of light flooded from the open hangar doors, and men were carrying red lamps across the field. He circled round, half wanting to land, hesitating: seeing the lights had somehow given him confidence, and at the same time a sense of foolishness made him reluctant to give up so soon. He turned away, altering his compass to south-east.

Soon the first darkness of night was creeping over the horizon, slurring lines and shapes, but he reckoned there was light enough to see for another half-hour yet. He found himself flying parallel to a railway; it was hard to read the map in this half light, so he stuck it in a pocket. The railway lines seemed to go on maddeningly straight forever, disappearing into the darkness, and gradually he surrendered to the hopeless feeling of being lost and wanting only to land, but it seemed too late now to try finding a way back to the field with lights. The country was changing; it became more wooded and small hills rose all round him. Long white fingers of mist were reaching out from the valleys; the land darkened with new shadows; the evening seemed to menace him with its beautiful tranquility. He wiped the windscreen with his

fingers and peered ahead. Suddenly he was flying in the middle of the white mist. It had taken him unawares, wrapping itself treacherously round him in chill moist folds. He felt an icy fear seize him that he was flying into the hills; for a moment it paralyzed his body. The instruments showed uncertain flickering needles; helplessly he watched the air-speed rising as the nose went down, then he opened the throttle and pulled back on the stick with the tenseness of the inexperienced pilot. The needles seemed to settle down and he climbed up, not caring in which direction. He only wanted to get higher, higher...

When at last he came out of the mist the altimeter was reading two thousand feet and he was flying over an unbroken sea of silken white; waves of gloom lay in its hollows. It was mysterious and very beautiful. The pupil shivered a little; he tried to wind his scarf tighter round his neck, but his fingers were numb with cold and fear. Flying was difficult because it was so hard to distinguish the instruments and he could only guess the position of the horizon. An ugly mask of fog sprawled across the sky and smothered the last flickering red of the sun; little grey wisps of it came to meet him. Looking over the side he could see flames tearing out of the exhaust, and it gave him the impression that he was burning a path into the night.

The pupil shouted down the speaking tube to an imaginary pilot in front. Then he put the end of his ear phones to his mouth and shouted down that, so that this time his voice struck back loud and harsh in his ears, and in the engulfing blackness it cheered him because it was so real. The plane slid now through empty tenebrous gaps of cloud and still he climbed up. The engine made a far-away sound which hummed itself in a comforting drone into his mind. His body relaxed and succumbed to a feeling of unutterable drowsiness. He imagined he was in a country train which crawled along a familiar line, very slowly, stopping at lots of small halts and stations; they were beginning to light the lamps at each station and guards shouted and swung lanterns in the mist; he watched the red sparks from the engine fly past the carriage window and vanish in the darkness; he was a small boy on his way back from school.

Again he shouted to hear his own voice. It was much colder and he reckoned he must be some six thousand feet up, but it was impossible to read the altimeter. He felt braver now because there was no longer any alternative: he could only climb on into the ever deepening

chasm of cloud: he was alone, challenging the night. He had the feeling that he dreamed and yet was awake in his dream...

Suddenly the night lay over and under the plane. It floated in a sparkling ocean of stars, free again in a land of frozen beauty. He switched off and turned off the petrol, but for ages the engine continued to fire and sputter. Then the movement of the propeller became slower and slower; it swung itself jerkily, painfully round until it stopped, hanging there like a dead thing, and there was no sound. Only the rushing, whistling air singing in the rigging wires. This was how he wanted it. This was how it should have been in his dream. The pupil unfastened the straps of the safety harness which secures the pilot in the cockpit. Then very slowly, very carefully, he rolled the plane over onto its back until he no longer felt anything firm or solid beneath him, and he was falling, falling, into an icy space, like a sleeper into the deepest of sleep".

Now then, what opinion did his meagre work arouse in the literary milieu of the time?

Marjorie Phillips said in *Books of the Month* (Simpkins Publishing Company, 1950): "Perhaps Rollo Woolley's *The Search* most haunts the imagination, because of the context in which it can now be seen. It is no more than a poetic sketch of a flight made in search of a missing plane; one of the only two sketches he was given time to publish".

And in his autobiography (*I am my brother: autobiography II*, Longmans, 1960), the editor of *The Search*, John Lehmann, recalled:

"In the British Navy, the drafted or volunteer ratings who had joined up only for the duration, were known as H. O. — 'Hostilities Only' — sailors. In the world of letters also there were 'Hostilities Only'. Some of them, like Rollo Woolley and Gully Mason, might have taken up writing as a serious occupation after the war; one can never know, because they were killed so soon after having written their two or three stories or poems, evidence only of their intention of the moment and not of the unrevealed strength of talent and will-power. Rollo Woolley, whom I only met once for half an hour very shortly before his last flight, was a sensitive, good-looking boy of twenty-three from Rugby and Oxford, the dreamy look in whose

eye was reflected in the slight but haunting story *The Search*, which I published in *New Writing and Daylight* in the winter of 1942-43. A crew goes out to search for an airplane reported missing. But is it really for this airplane they are looking for? Loch, mountain and ocean take on a sad, timeless, symbolic aspect in the young airman's eye:

*What did they expect us to find? No, we had seen nothing. All our lives we had been searching and had found nothing. Only the whitewashed cottages and some strands of seaweed. Only some fragments of cloud and the blueness of the sea. Only the thinness of the empty glittering waves. I felt too weary to remember the original object of our search. Certainly it had been quite clear a little while ago: a plane was missing: one of our pilots had not returned. But that was only the previous night, and surely we had been searching for longer than that? Ages and ages before we had begun the search...*

Who can tell whether Rollo Woolley would have been able to develop the delicate poetic vein which these three pages revealed? Slight though they are, they have a curious perfection of expression in their time and place: an achievement which has nothing to do with bulk and complexity, and is rarely granted, even to those with far greater ambition, willpower and luck in survival".

We also found the following review of *The Pupil* in *The book of the sky* (1956):

"Freudians might call it a death wish, this strange and disturbing story of Rollo Woolley's. 'The Pupil,' a description of a student pilot on a solo flight, is like a story told by a man looking at himself acting out a dream.

'The Pupil' first appeared in *Horizon*, a British literary magazine. Cyril Connolly, the editor, made this comment: 'In a younger fighter pilot's diary a whole page was found printed in capitals with the words, 'My story accepted by *Horizon*!'. It was his first and his last, for a few months later, The Pupil was killed in Tunisia".

Promoted to Flying Officer on 28 December 1941, after a period of training in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, Rollo was posted to 152 Squadron, which in November 1942 was

operating in North Africa. A month later, on December 2, flying his Spitfire over Tunisia, he shot down a German plane, but was himself shot down soon after. After six months of searching, the authorities labeled the case “missing believed killed”, until his plane was found.

In *Sometimes a soldier*, Geoffrey Woolley (who at the time was serving as a chaplain in Algiers) recalled: “The whole squadron had been engaged in a dog-fight over Tunis; Rollo was last seen apparently bringing down an enemy plane, but was himself attacked by another. He had greatly endeared himself to his squadron, and his fluent French had made him particularly useful as interpreter”.

On 13 January the Partridges saw Jan in London. Frances noted in her diary: “I really dread meeting Jan, but the instant I saw her sitting in the hot lounge of the Rembrandt Hotel with a glass of sherry and Geoff’s letters in front of her I realized that her courage was equal to the situation. She began to talk at once about the letters, the possibilities, what could be inferred. There was never a tear and no more tremor than usual in her long thin hands... Geoff’s letters were maddening: instead of definite details about the exact wording of the report, he wrote crazily about feeling Rollo near him, and the stars, and God, and how kind everyone was to him. So much for his Christianity. Next day we lunched with Janetta at the Ivy; her courage was as remarkable as Jan’s, but different”.

Exactly one month later, on 13 February 1943, Jan died in a London hospital. Over the phone, Janetta explained to Frances that her mother had recovered from the flu, but suffered a relapse and died shortly afterwards due to the incompetence of her carers. Janetta recalled that “when I took her there I suddenly saw that she was dying. The hospital couldn’t understand why she had died and said she should have had every chance, but seemed to have no resistance at all”. Her husband believed that she had let herself die: “In the following February came news that my wife had died of pneumonia in London; her poor health had been shattered by the shock of Rollo’s death, and although she wrote most bravely it was that which led to her final illness. The War Office offered to allow me to return to England, but there was then no point in doing so, and every reason to carry on”. Frances shared this view: “There had been no more news about Rollo, and she had clearly lost the will to survive”.

In less than five weeks, Janetta had lost her mother and brother. Her friends tried to pull her out of the depressive pit into which she fell and remained for months. "It was appalling how much I cried", she said years later. "Everything, everywhere brought on uncontrollable floods of tears". There was more trouble before the funeral, when Jan's brother, Conservative MP Ian Orr-Ewing, shouted at her over the phone. He had probably heard something "about all his sister's family being thoroughly disreputable", Janetta deduced. Those who tried to comfort her knew how little they could do. "Rollo you will get over", Connolly reassured, "for it is not so much what he was as what he might have become... you will get over that. Jan is a different matter... Try writing down your worst moments of regret and nostalgia — it makes them seem worse at the time but it helps to get them out of the system".

On March 9 Frances registered: "I visited Janetta and found her finishing a picture propped on a chair, and eating a lettuce. When an air-raid alarm went I was looking out of the window at Regent's Park, and I saw the Nannies and children hurry off in various directions, while the soaring wail of the siren shot up again and again over the peaceful scene of green lawns and water, children and swans, reminding me of fireworks rockets — seeming as they do to leave a tall question mark in the air — or the cries of outlandish birds". Some time later she comments: "Janetta described her horror of the raids all too vividly. She is oppressed all day by the expectation of the siren going, and when it does it is like a stretcher of someone waiting for an operation".

And on May 10 she says: "Kenneth came one night, walking unexpectedly into the sitting-room. After a while he handed her a letter in rather an offhand way, saying, 'Oh, here's your father's letter about Rollo'. She read it and was obviously shaken. When she handed it to me I saw that it seemed to give absolute proof that Rollo was dead. His papers had turned up on the dead body of a soldier. Of course while the official verdict is 'missing', it is impossible to crush hope altogether". "Rollo always seemed to have a doomed air, as if he knew himself not to be long for this earth", Frances grimly reflected.

At that time Connolly confided in his diary, after launching several diatribes against women in general: "What I love is an air of the primitive, an aloofness — as when Janetta walked in

carrying her baby,' and adds: "Visite angoissante de J who bewailed the loss of mother and brother while, looking at her, I bewailed the loss of wife and child". His wife and daughter were abroad. As Janetta breast-fed her daughter, the sun streamed in through the large windows of Bedford Square, illuminating "evenly the greed and innocence of childhood, the courage and misery of youth, and the sterile remorse and despair of middle age. Too late, too late. And yet it was all so difficult at the time, caught in the Jean-Diana scissors with Jan and Humphrey Slater as obstacles, and the, at that time, infuriating adolescence, 'like a puppy with worms', of Janetta herself". This and other references suggest that Connolly had not overcome his feelings for Janetta; he would never forgive himself for letting her go. But, one might ask, had he ever possessed her? Even well into the 1950s, while married to Barbara Skelton (who hated Janetta), he would attempt a new love affair.

In June 1943, Janetta went into labor and gave birth to a girl named Nicolette. Just before the birth, she had changed her name to Sinclair-Loutit, with the intention to produce what her partner referred to as "a nice elegant birth certificate".

By this time, they had relocated from their original lodgings to a larger flat situated opposite the gates of Regent's Park, right above a shop called "Claire's," which specialized in handmade chocolates. The doctor remembered the atmosphere being distinctly Gallic, with French earthenware bowls and café au lait being prominent features. They enjoyed dinners with Elizabeth Bowen, who lived at Clarence Terrace, attended the first recital at the Wigmore Hall by Natasha Spender, and engaged in a social life that revolved around Connolly and his associates from *Horizon*.

Evelyn Waugh recorded in his diary, that at that time, "Cyril Connolly has moved into Regent's Park in a decent house of which he has taken every decent room; the rest go to a Mrs Lootit. I scared him by saying the crown authorities would expel them all for living in sin and have made up for it by the gift of a jardinière".

Sinclair-Loutit recalled an encounter with Orwell, who was dining alone at the Majorca in Soho. Upon spotting the couple passing by, he invited them inside to join him, "though it would

not be me he wanted to talk to". He also recounted a peculiar incident involving Lucian Freud, who was serving in the Merchant Navy at the time. Janetta invited him for dinner to discuss his concerns about receiving a summons for an army medical examination. They all devised a strategy where Freud would paint his black shoes white, and by continually drawing attention to them, he would be deemed psychologically unfit for service.

In Sinclair-Loutit's reminiscence, they lived in blissful happiness, adhering to their own choices and unaffected by social norms: "It was our affair and ours alone". Nineteen forty three "was the happiest year of my life", he concludes. Janetta, for her part, "had an admirable mastery of the small things of life, so our days were comfortable and trouble free. With her, problems vanished as soon as they emerged". However, Janetta harbored doubts of her own. She found childcare to be strenuous work, compounded by Connolly's "jeering 'pram in the hall' attitude". Despite this, Sinclair-Loutit remained convinced that they were dwelling in domestic bliss. He believed even the Partridges had grown to embrace him, "treating my emergence into their world with tolerant kindness". If there were any seeds of doubt, they resided in the realization that, as he acknowledged, the domestic harmony he experienced made him "absurdly self-confident and far too pleased with myself".

As we have seen, the arrival of Rollo's personal effects made Kenneth realize how undeserving his position was back home. This happened at the same time as a summons to an interview with Air Vice-Marshal Sir Victor Richardson, where he acknowledged that he was being considered as a candidate for a staff officer's position in the Balkans.

Whoever secured the position would reach it through a somewhat convoluted path. Sinclair-Loutit learned that the immediate requirement was for an Allied Military Liaison Officer stationed in Cairo. However, this role was seen as an interim step, expected to lead to United Nations agency assignments in Yugoslavia or Romania as part of the Allied efforts to stabilize parts of Eastern Europe formerly occupied by the Nazis.

"The immediate need was to fill a post in Allied Military Liaison which called for specific language and professionalism; there was a clear perspective towards the post-war

implantation of UNRRA in the Balkans. To ensure access to military facilities and to situate the work within both British and Allied Military authority the job was listed as for a Lt Colonel on the General Service List... I knew that the decision to leave London and to go to Cairo en route for the Balkans was important but I did not foresee its repercussions over the years. It had been a hard decision to make, even though the spirit of the times — in that spring of 1944 — made assent inevitable to anyone with my own family background".

Still haunted by the memory of Rollo, the doctor expressed his enthusiasm. Janetta, on the other hand, was furious. "To her it seemed incomprehensible, a perverse reversal of all our priorities, a silly incomprehensible seeking for adventure on my part for which our little family would have to pay the price. She did not want to know any more about it, nor to talk about it. The subject became unmentionable... Janetta outlawed any talk about the Balkans, about this job or anything to do with my posting. Never before had we had such a taboo". It was indeed an interesting and exhilarating opportunity, she later reflected, "and there was every reason to say yes, except for me". With no further instructions from the authorities, life in Regent's Park and at Ham Spray continued much as it had before. Frances's diary entry for late 1943 mentions that "Janetta and family are here", while she also records a three-week holiday in the spring of 1944 during which "Nicolette slept in the garden, crawled all over the lawn, and grew fatter, browner, and more energetic before our eyes".

In the third week of July, Sinclair-Loutit received his orders without warning. There was one last weekend at Ham Spray, but his departure was perceived as "a desertion". Even the Partridges were appalled, and Sinclair-Loutit couldn't shake the feeling that in their eyes, he now qualified for the "pacifist anathema." He was to go to Newquay, where a plane would transport him to the Middle East. Upon arriving in the Cornish town, he spent three days wandering the streets and awaiting further instructions. Despite making several attempts to call Janetta, he was unable to have a proper conversation with her. During one of his wanderings, Sinclair-Loutit stumbled upon a glazed earthenware figure dating back to the 1820s, which he considered a "sweetheart's token" that might resonate with his estranged love. He arranged for the shop to post it to her. On July 24th, with a vague sense that he had

created a situation beyond his capability to resolve, he departed England for the Middle East. Just before embarking, he sent a letter assuring Janetta “how much I think + think about you + how I long to hear from you + how I remember that last warm ½ hour with Nicky roaring with laughter at the edge of the bed”.

The doctor enjoyed his time in Cairo. He resided at Patrick Balfour’s flat, appreciating its view overlooking the Ibn Tulun mosque, and he relished the vibrant atmosphere of the city, which made London appear dull in comparison. Despite sending a stream of letters back to Regent’s Park, he realized that the crucial issues were unlikely to be addressed, given that Janetta “could never get over her disapproval of my being so willing to depart overseas”. “I can feel your warmth + kindness so well”, he wrote in mid-August, “please don’t get unhappy — please don’t hate me for not being there”.

Eager to appease her, he purchased an expensive wristwatch and arranged for the painter Feliks Topolski to deliver it. However, this gesture also caused some concern, as the messenger appeared to have ulterior motives, seeing the errand as an opportunity to win Janetta’s favor. Eventually, she needed reassurance that it was indeed Kenneth, not her Polish admirer, who had sent the gift.

During a visit to Ham Spray in early September, Frances observed Janetta’s face turned “grey and set” as she read a letter from her father informing that Rollo’s body had been discovered in Tunisia, buried alongside his airplane, and subsequently reburied in the Massicault War Cemetery, “with only a plain wooden cross”. Frances recorded later in the autumn: “Thought a good deal about the passing of youth. Here is Janetta in the full bloom of youth and beauty, able to make anyone’s heart beat faster, yet does she seem to realize the advantages of her lot? Or its impermanence? Not a bit”. And on September 15 she comments: “In the evening Julia, Janetta and I sat round our world fire, and a lively conversation sprang up and lasted until bedtime about love and the changing attitudes towards it. We questioned Janetta about the contemporary picture. She answered readily enough, calling up a (to me) dready vision — of hopping into bed at the smallest provocation, no courtship, no gradual approach or Stendhalian crystallization, much and kindness, that utterly useless emotion

jealousy, of course, and desperate attempts to preserve a cynical outlook. Perhaps no generation can find the attitude of another to this important subject entirely sympathetic".

Whatever Janetta might have conveyed in her letters to Kenneth — none of which survives — it was causing him increasing unease. "Oh darling wolfers don't get the idea I'm no longer a factor in your life or you in mine", he said at the end of September. "I do see a very good chance of your coming out as a private person soon after we get in, say in the New Year". They must "try not to fret" he advised a month later.

Late in November 1944 Sinclair-Loutit left for Bari, as UNRRA made contact with the Yugoslav partisans, and was then appointed director of Yugoslav health and relief services. Sonia told Janetta that she had recently been talking to the writer Arthur Calder-Marshall who had "seen Kenneth both in Cairo and Bari, and he said... he thought there was every chance of K. resigning and coming back". Diana adds she was "convinced that the old boy will find a way of getting you out or coming back himself, so I do hope you are not feeling too despairing about this".

In the meantime, mother and daughter had celebrated Christmas at Ham Spray amidst a small, exclusive Bloomsbury gathering. It was snowing and Frances recorded Janetta "stalking about on Burgo's stilts with her long hair swinging; Nicky trotting purposefully about, a tiny Father Christmas, in her red siren suit frosted with snow". On New Year's Eve they celebrated Janetta's twenty-third birthday. She told a friend that "we all sat down to write forecasts for the year to come. Somehow when it came to the point I couldn't think of anything likely..." She assured her situation was "hopelessly unsatisfactory", but had decided to "slog on".

"Things have looked up quite a bit here and next time I write I expect to have something pretty definite to say", Kenneth wrote early in the New Year. His plan was for Janetta, potentially accompanied by their daughter, to join him in Yugoslavia. To this end he applied for compassionate leave ("Dear Wolfers... I am determined that you shall never feel unsupported, forgotten, neglected, side tracked, secondary or anything else"). As he returned to Ham Spray in the spring of 1945, he realized that the situation was not looking good. Upon his arrival, he

discovered that Frances was “utterly opposed to any thought of Janetta and Nicolette moving out of England into a newly liberated Belgrade”. However, Kenneth considered his time off to be “paradisiacal”, even though Janetta remained mostly quiet (“I no longer loved him, no longer wanted him, no longer even liked him”).

In Cairo, Sinclair-Loutit worked side by side with Walter Edward Guinness, 1st Baron de Moyne, then British representative in the Middle East. The statesman warned him: “It’s not the last days of war that are going to count. It is the first months of peace that will decide the politics of Europe for the foreseeable future”. The doctor recalled decades later: “In 1944 I was thirty-one years old, and I found myself at the beginning of an international career in a position of leadership to which, at home, I could not possibly have aspired until I was ten or fifteen years older. All this must have gone a bit to my head. In Cairo my ambitions were becoming more and more engaged; Lord Moyne had shown me new perspectives within the nascent United Nations”.

On Victory Day, May 8th, the couple found themselves separated by half a continent once again. Sinclair-Loutit was revealing at the French Embassy in Belgrade, organizing the Free French air-flight in the hope of bringing his family to join him. Meanwhile, Janetta sent reports of the celebrations in London back to Ham Spray. Ever true to her Bloomsbury upbringing, she remained somewhat skeptical of large crowds, finding the sight of massed humanity faintly unsettling. She described the crowds as “very depressing indeed, and the flags and decorations pathetic although often very pretty”. While the bonfires were “wonderful, bringing back the old ecstasies of staring into a fire”, they also stirred up painful memories of the Blitz. As for the war-weary Londoners, “I so loathe the masses of boiling people with scarlet dripping faces, wearing tiny paper hats with ‘Ike’s Babe’ or ‘Victory’ written all over them”.

The summer of 1945 brought about some changes in Janetta’s living arrangements, once again demonstrating the continued influence that Connolly held over her. The lease for 49 Bedford Square was coming to an end, and Cyril and Lys needed to find a new place to live. Upon hearing that 25 Sussex Place, an elegant location near Regent’s Park, was available for lease, someone suggested it to them. To secure the property, the financially strapped Connolly

realized he needed an additional lessee, and Janetta agreed to fill that role. It's plausible to assume that she accepted this offer to escape a relationship that had begun to sour. After inspecting the premises — Frances was amazed by their "grandeur and beauty" —, they divided the accommodations, with the Connollys taking the master bedroom, study, dining room, drawing room, and kitchen, while Janetta and her daughter occupied the top floor and basement. Evelyn Waugh informed Patrick Balfour: "Connolly has moved from Bloomsbury to Regent's Park. He and Mrs Lubbock have imposed on a dead-end kid called, I think, Jacqueline, a former connection of yours, half-sister of Angela; she has bare feet like a camel, face like Prod's, [Peter Rodd, Nancy Mitford husband] and a baby by a communist doctor. She has been induced to purchase a substantial mansion of which she is allowed the use of attics and basements while the Connollys squat on the three principal floors". Waugh, attending one of Connolly's lunch parties at Sussex Place, where Janetta had been reluctantly assigned to work in the kitchen, was intrigued to find that she went about her duties barefoot. Subsequently, she became a recurring figure in his diaries and in letters exchanged with Nancy Mitford, referred to as "Mrs. Bluefeet".

In another letter to Connolly himself, Waugh mentions her again, always in a disparaging tone: "As for secretaries, Lys was beautifully neat and, as I remember her, Miss Brownell was quite presentable. Some time later you had a barefooted landlady but (surely?) she had no part in Horizon and very little part in the delightful parties you gave".

But, what did Janetta think about Waugh at all? "Well, he wouldn't hesitate to sort of snap back and say, 'Well, you're a bit of a bore, aren't you?'... And treated with such sort of respect", she laments. At least in this respect, she and Waugh were on the same side: "I think I was awfully lucky in knowing an awful lot of people that weren't bores... I mean, they were fascinating, really, on the whole, the people I saw".

The lifestyle of Janetta and her circle did not let up. At a party at Connolly's house, Janetta met the writer and publisher David "Bunny" Garnett, a prominent member of Bloomsbury and a close friend of the Partridges. On 24 May, Frances noted in her diary: "A lot of letters. Bunny writes about his new daughter, and says he 'met at a party an amazingly, an almost

embarrassingly beautiful girl, who turned out to be Janetta'." And remarks: "Ten years ago it would have been fatal to have seen her at all".

On June 14 Frances wrote: "Last night Janetta and I went to Sadlers Wells, where a large, excited and mainly youthful audience was collected. Then the opera began and we were all attention, immediately caught by the beauty and startling originality of what we were seeing and above all hearing. I often longed to have some interesting, thrilling passage back to hear again. In the first act the most arresting scene was the trial and acquittal of Grimes for the murder of his apprentice, when he sings a marvellous aria, expressing the agony of the outcast. The second act included a passage of intense and mounting dramatic excitement which moved both Janetta and me profoundly, where Grimes is pursued and hounded by all the inhabitants of the little town, indignant at his ill-treatment of the boys, and suspicious that he had murdered the last. 'Grimes is at his exercise!' they had chanted earlier — haunting words from Crabbe's poem set to haunting music; and now the ever louder and more terrifying cries of 'Grimes! Grimes!' deepen the horror of his plight".

Frances's diary for the summer of 1945 is full of red flags about Sinclair-Loutit's future. In mid-June, she commented that Janetta "still sees no solution of her relation with Kenneth — he never refers to returning from Belgrade and she feels the position is hopeless". "The plain fact that my personal life at home had failed as rapidly, and as completely, as my working life overseas had succeeded was something that I had totally failed to anticipate — I had even been thinking that the one would enhance the other", Sinclair-Loutit reflected.

Shortly thereafter, a more ominous event was noted — a visit to Ham Spray, arranged by their mutual friend Nicko Henderson, of Robert Kee, "a delightful young man, just back from three years in a German prison camp". Kee, born in Calcutta and a former bomber pilot whose aircraft was shot down on the Dutch coast, was tall, saturnine, and melancholically focused. Frances recalled:

"After dinner he started talking about his life there: it was of fascinating interest. I was struck by the calm and sanity with which he spoke of it, but Ralph noticed that his hand was

trembling, especially as he said that in spite of the positive relief it was that there were no small decisions to make in prison, the reverse was also true, and it was torment to feel that you weren't free to take important ones affecting your whole life. He had been released by Russians, who were friendly, full of gaiety and vitality, but barbarians. They raped and looted unchecked by their officers, and the Germans turned with relief to the English and Americans. 'You are good soldiers', they said to him. No complaint about the Germans, who were unfailingly correct. It was typical of them that when they found hacksaws being smuggled into the camp inside gramophone records they didn't destroy the lot as we should have done, but X-rayed each one and passed the innocent ones.

His stories of escape made Ralph laugh until he nearly cried. It was an RAF camp, full of very enterprising young men, who never stopped tunneling and planning to escape, and many got away, though most were later caught. They undertook the tunneling chiefly for something to occupy their minds, and reaching daylight was a terrifying moment. The tunnels were inconceivably elaborate. One had a shaft twenty feet deep, with buckets going up and down carrying earth; there was a railway track, with electric lighting and a switchboard worked by a man wearing a green eye-shade. Above them the Germans were constantly probing and listening, but they never found the tunnel. When the outer air was reached the excitement was so tremendous that the first man generally made the hole too small and everyone who followed stuck. Some men made gliders and balloons. Another planned to turn his flying-coat inside out and disguise himself as the Airedale dog of one of the German officers. Some passed out as members of the Swiss Red Cross. Generally the punishment for attempted escape was fourteen days' imprisonment. Suddenly a large number of men were shot as an example — and there were no escapes after that.

Most of the prisoners started some sort of serious study in the camp. Those who didn't went to pieces.

Both Ralph and I looked enormously to Nicko's friend, whose name is Robert Kee, and wondered whether he and Janetta would like each other. 'That's the man for her', Ralph said".

Nicko Henderson recalled: "At the Connolly party Robert also encountered Janetta for the first time. They fell instantaneously for each other, as I knew from the way, almost immediately, I became the odd man out. From Cytil's party the three of us went to dine at the Gargoyle, following which Robert and Janetta disappeared, very much together".

Confirmation that a subsequent introduction quickly led to a relationship is evident from a mid-July 1945 entry, where Frances notes, "Kenneth is suggesting that they go out to Belgrade, but she doesn't want to, resists thinking about it". In the very next sentence, Frances adds that Janetta "has been seeing Nicko's friend Robert Kee, but I don't know how much". Soon enough Frances admitted: "I find myself craving to bring these two together in an obsessional way".

By mid-September, Frances was reporting that although Kenneth had arranged a permit for Belgrade, he had started to realize that "something is the matter". "Indeed, something — or somebody rather — is the matter and *is* Robert Kee. Ralph and I are amazed that having decided two young people were made for each other, they too should seem to think so. Yet Janetta feels in duty bound to go out to Belgrade, though gritting her teeth and dreading it; nor does she want to leave her new London house. She described a week's holiday she had taken in the Welsh mountains, never mentioning her companion, nor even if she had one, but we suppose it was Robert. As a returned prisoner of war he may well suffer from indecision and uncertainty; but holding the view I do of Janetta's special attractions I can't help feeling sorry for Kenneth, whose stock I believe to be lower than he knows. We begged her to try and persuade him to come over here rather than plunge herself and Nicky into possible emotional anguish in a background of utter strangeness and the horrors of a Belgrade winter. And then not be able to get away should she want to! But she sticks to her plan — perhaps from a sort of pride. Or fatalism".

Frances visited Janetta again on 26 September: "All caught the early train to London. Then to Sussex Place to see what Janetta has made of the house. Without signs of tremendous planning, she has made her part of it charmingly alive, fresh, with touches of inspiration in the way she has painted cupboards and windows, and chosen her colours. There is also some of

the chaos and higgledy-piggledy of youth. She has the lower floors, opening onto the garden, Cyril Connolly the *piano nobile*... Janetta found a pathetically anxious letter from Kenneth, realizing something was happening and begging to be told what. She sank down into a chair with a lost tragic expression, and said: ‘Oh dear — I feel I shall really have to go with him. I can’t face it all’.

As frequently occurred when Janetta’s complex romantic entanglements reached a critical juncture, another interested party was beginning to make moves. Two weeks later, Frances observed that Janetta had dispatched a “useless, awful letter” to Belgrade “saying she wouldn’t go... and he must come back to London”. Connolly advised her to leave, anticipating that this action would be more likely to sabotage the relationship than to revive it. “As Janetta has the sense to see, he would like her to be always unattached”.

Cyril told her in one of his letters: “You must cheer up — if Kenneth is getting some leave — even if it is only leave — at least you will see him and then can put your point of view to him, and give him an ultimatum if necessary. Don’t be too upset about it. You hurt H. S. [Hugh Slater] enormously without meaning to by leaving him, and now you are being hurt — all human beings hurt each other where love is concerned, except those who have found out how hurt they can get and who therefore try not to hurt other people. I am sure Kenneth can’t grasp what you are feeling, because he hasn’t felt all that himself. Anyhow, you have got a baby, a home and a paint-box... and also you know quite well that you aren’t deserted — only neglected — which is quite different and not nearly so bad”.

In another letter, likely penned in early 1945, this theme resurfaces, condemning Sinclair-Loutit not for callousness but for poor timing: “I think that your whole predicament is due only to a miscalculation of Kenneth’s about when the war would end”. As for the immediate future he says: “I think it is terribly hard for you, but you have got a temporary home, which is more than most people, with substitute parents who adore you, a studio, an ability to paint and read; and the time to do so — and a baby — which I understand is held to be both a dynamo of happiness and a pledge for the future — it is really folly to undo all this knitting — unless you are quite certain that you don’t love K. any more and never will...”.

A third letter reminiscing about bygone days spent in the West Country evolves into a passionate longing for what could have been: "You say you always get what you want, all I can say is what a pity you didn't want me, or you would have been a painter instead of a buxom matron embowered in bourgeois bliss. At least when you were with Humphrey there was always a bracing feeling of hope. Now whenever I see you I start brooding about our might have beens, — if you had been at St Gervais when I walked round to see you, if they had given me your right address at Hammersmith instead of one in Glasgow when I sent an S.O.S. to you, if I had never met Diana and we had had an affair from when we met at Patrick's party. As we should have done — or if you had never met Humphrey, or anyhow not fallen for him... or not married him when I asked you to marry me!"

But, we must ask ourselves, was Connolly, in 1940, still married to Jean and deeply entangled with Diana, truly convinced that he could pursue an eighteen-year-old girl? Is he genuinely serious, or is this merely myth-making? And what reaction is he attempting to provoke in Janetta? Is it genuinely constructive, for instance, to inform a twenty-three-year-old woman with a young child, whose partner is serving in Occupied Europe, that "My Id is still in love with you and always assumes — as Ids always do — that the past is the present and that no one else exists", or that "I would have liked to have had that baby you have got"? Or could this be just the manner in which his mind operated in the presence of old friends and lovers, where anything could be uttered, and everyone was compensating for each other's shortcomings?

Be that as it may, Sinclair-Loutit recalled: "She was courageously honest; suddenly we were both aghast at the ruin of it all... I knew that Janetta had never told me a lie, her honesty had always been total and it was one of my reasons for loving her. It seems that only a few weeks before my getting back to London she had met someone who had become so important to her that only an act of self-blinding would allow me to count on her reactions continuing to be those which I had known so well. She was sad about this but there it was. He was no one I knew. He was an RAF ex-POW called Robert Kee".

On 19 October Frances scored: "A telephone call from Janetta. Cables have been flying

between her and Kenneth, and he is coming to England on the 27th. ‘Can I come down and discuss the appalling muddle I’m in?’”.

By the end of October, a crisis was imminent. Frances couldn’t comprehend Janetta’s reluctance to end the relationship.

“Janetta and Nicky arrived at tea-time. She looks pale and tired and it was difficult to keep off the subject burning to be discussed until Nicky and Burgo were in bed. Then, each with a glass of gin and vermouth, ‘Now’, we said, ‘if you can bear it, will you begin to tell us everything that has happened since we saw you last’. Turning rather pink she did so, and we talked of nothing else till bedtime. In reply to her letter to Kenneth saying she wouldn’t come to Belgrade but would like to see him here, he had bombarded her with letters and cables. He doesn’t appear to take in the serious threat presented by Robert. Yet she hasn’t abandoned all thought of Belgrade, and has even got her passport as asked. *Why* does she still entertain the idea? For it is plain that all trace of love for Kenneth is gone, and that what is left is liking, pity, some respect and a sense of responsibility. Yet she must somehow or other summon up the energy to face him on Saturday and spend a fortnight with him which may well be agonizing. She says she will not marry him, but his energy and powers of persuasion may well get her out to Belgrade. She asks why shouldn’t one be happy making a life with a person one likes but doesn’t love? And she is twenty-three.

With someone so young and vulnerable we are naturally afraid of being too interfering or dominant. Or should I for once say what I really believe, that love is far the most important thing in life, a stronger, potentially more permanent and all-pervading force than the wildest of girlhood dreams suggests. People talk, out of a sort of prudery, as if it vanished entirely after five or six years of marriage, and only an affable, humdrum relation was left, enabling couples to jog along pretty well if they allowed each other plenty of freedom. But it needn’t be like that at all. It’s a hopeless failure if it is. After twenty years together one can be in a sense just as deeply in love as ever one was. Love doesn’t simply fade away like ‘old soldiers’; it changes its character, naturally, and matures, but its depth and richness can be as great as ever. And I feel Janetta to be capable, if anyone I know is, of such a relation.

But what of Robert? He is the mystery. Ralph understands his standing back and apparently refusing to try and take her from Kenneth. I'm not sure that I do. The Bloomsbury philosophy of sex, surrounded by which Ralph and I have lived for twenty years, disregards conventions but certainly not human feelings, nor does it sanction causing unnecessary pain. G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* set personal relations on a pinnacle for Bloomsbury, yet I think they are less promiscuous than their image in the eyes of the more conventional, whose sexual deviations may be under cover, or — in the case of the very rich — who buy as many mates as they can afford.

The telephone rang: Robert for Janetta. She came back beaming. 'Everything seems to have changed', she said".

October 25: "Now that Kenneth is coming back, most of Janetta's friends are chary of giving her advice, perhaps they don't want to be thought of as enemies if she stays with him. Robert has had to dash up to Yorkshire to his RAF Station. This afternoon I drove a pale, sad-faced Janetta to the station".

And one week later: "Since Janetta went to London the thought of the agonizing position she is in has lain like a sediment at the bottom of my mind. This morning she broke her silence with a letter written 'in a frame of mind as near lunacy' as she had ever been in".

Back in England, Sinclair-Loutit joined the household at Sussex Place, and noted that "there certainly was a welcome, but something lacked". There was a dreadful moment when he picked up the telephone extension and overheard a male voice on the other end asking the silent Janetta if she was still there. Tensions escalated on November 2nd when Janetta said she would take Nicky to Ham Spray and expected Kee to join them there. Desperately grasping for a solution, Kenneth asked if he could accompany them to Paddington.

At Ham Spray the day seemed to be filled with "a feverish disquiet". Janetta called to express that everything felt "too awful", stating that she wouldn't go to Belgrave and contemplating leaving Kenneth then and there. An hour or two later, they arrived at Paddington, only to find Kee waiting on the platform. Sinclair-Loutit acknowledged, "I could

not have been confronted with a clearer demonstration of my loss". Before they reached Newbury, Kenneth phoned the Partridges and requested that they look after Janetta and her daughter. He added that he believed Kee was a weak and immature character, not to be trusted with their happiness. He added that Ham Spray politesse "had concealed from me the shallowness of their acceptance of me as the right partner for their truly beloved Janetta".

The Partridges drove to fetch their three guests from Newbury. "Ralph and I drove in the dusk to meet the refugees, and there they were looking worn-out and pale, a pathetic group on the dark station platform. Poor Robert, it must have been awful for him arriving among people who were practically strangers, but he put a very good face on it, and possibly it made things easier that he was at once whirled into a scene of eerie festivity, when the old guy was set crazily on a broken chair and burnt in a blazing bonfire under the Portuguese laurel. Unrecognizable figures stood round huddled in coats, and the blaze and the nostalgic smell of burning branches acted as a good solvent to our strange mixed party, blending them together. But Janetta looks quite exhausted, and after two endless telephone calls from Kenneth was almost in tears. All to bed — what a day!"

On 6 November Frances recounted, no doubt with great relief, the end of the affair with Kenneth and the beginning of a new one with Robert: "Janetta said Kenneth had been perfectly reasonable yesterday, and had a good deal to say about his girl Angela who is coming to London. He had been 'talking himself blue' to all Janetta's friends, especially Cyril. She and Robert discuss their plans, and at the momento are considering taking refugee in Devon or Cornwall, but it will of course be a honeymoon handicapped by a ready-made child, something full of problems. It has been very moving and disquieting to have these two enacting their drama of All for Love under our roof — as if electricity had been let loose in the house".

Despite being buffeted by the emotional storm that had swept through their household, the Partridges couldn't help but feel a sense of triumph in its aftermath: "When Ralph and I are alone together we chorus Robert's praises... I don't remember Ralph ever before taking such a liking to a younger man". Convinced of Janetta's wise choice, they made every effort to

discourage her from briefly returning to Sussex Place a day or so later. Their relief was palpable when she returned, informing them that "Kenneth had been quiet and matter-of-fact and accepted everything".

However, not everyone took a positive view of Janetta's actions. Frances lets us know in her entry of 9 November:

"A letter from a friend saying how distressed she was by Janetta's lack of love for Kenneth. 'She expects too much of husbands, if only for Nicky's sake they should stay together. No one else could be expected to take such an interest in her.' How can one expect too much? Or rather, what is the use of husbands if one doesn't expect the highest and the best? And I don't think I'm being romantic, but severely rational. Moreover, is there not great cruelty in condemning a girl of twenty-three to spend the rest of her life with a man she doesn't love and who has for some time been living with someone else? Even from Nicky's point of view, would the inevitable disagreements not be disturbing for her too?"

The wind blows from the bitter East; we all retract a little into our shells, whether from the chill in the air or sense of anticlimax, and there is a noticeable undercurrent of irritability. Nicky reacts on her own way to the situation, and at breakfast she enters the room at a red-faced tearful gallop, one arm outstretched towards Janetta, her hair flying, a tiny Tintoretto bacchante. Only Robert remains apparently imperturbable, writing and writing away in an exercise book in the midst of every disturbance".

From the sidelines, gossips eagerly seized upon any tantalizing morsels that Connolly happened to drop. Nancy Mitford promptly shared details of a visit from "Smarting Smarty" with Evelyn Waugh: "His description of the final Bluefeet parting beats everything... He says in the end it was so mixed up with who should have the electric boiler that sentiment and feeling seemed no longer to exist". Connolly, she adds, had another source of anxiety: "He is very cross because now Mrs Hugefeet will be very poor and Smarty foresees lodgers, and worse". However, as Taylor points out, Janetta "might at various times in her career be vagrant,

impulsive, detached and indecisive, but the people who organized her professional and social lives — Connolly in particular — were generally anything but".

By Christmas 1945, having sorted through the belongings of his former residence, Sinclair-Loutit withdrew to Yugoslavia. Janetta and Nicky celebrated the holiday season at Ham Spray, where Nicky became captivated by Saxon Sydney-Turner, an elderly veteran of the Bloomsbury circle.

# Chapter 6.

After several years of stagnation, Lys Dunlap's efforts to convince Connolly to marry appeared to be on the verge of success. She had divorced Ian Lubbock, and legal documents from Reno, Nevada, indicated that Jean was taking steps to separate herself from Connolly.

The only remaining legal requirement was for Connolly to navigate the divorce proceedings through British courts. However, this necessitated a level of determination and commitment that Connolly had never possessed. Faced with the prospect of clarity and commitment instead of his usual vagueness and indecision, he naturally hesitated and finally back-tracked. So Lys opted for the next best option: she changed her name by deed poll. This was on January 10, 1946, and in the spring, the couple embarked on a pseudo-wedding tour of Europe. They visited Paris and Corsica before going to Switzerland, accompanied by the artist John Craxton.

Meanwhile, the house in Sussex Place was entrusted to Janetta and Kee. According to Frances, everything had been going "wonderfully lovely well" until Robert faced the threat of a court-martial for writing newspaper articles about his experiences in the prison camp, which he hadn't submitted to the RAF censors. Janetta also had her own project: she illustrated a childcare primer by her friend Dorry Metcalf. Published in 1946 by the Pilot Press, *Bringing Up Children* was a particularly ironic undertaking in light of the memories later recounted by Nicky Loutit. Intrigued by Connolly ("Cyril was the king, even I knew that, and if he bothered he was nice to me"), fascinated by Lys and her perfume bottles, Nicky came to realized that the main impediment to a peaceful existence was Kee, or rather her mother's infatuation with him. "He was handsome, charming and angry", she recalls. "My mother loved him, though he wanted to kill me".

"The presence of Robert and Janetta, both so beautiful and charming, enhances everything for both Ralph and me, and in exactly the same way", Frances wrote that summer. On Burgo's birthday, 13 July 1946, the Partridges celebrated in the company of the couple. However, something was not right and they knew it.

"A bath before lunch — we read in Frances diary —. The water in the swimming-pool is getting much warmer and our baths last longer and are pandemonic. Ralph bounces in with a roar and a splash, Janetta knots her hair on top of her head and swims about very fast, breast-stroke but crab-wise, with her head and neck well out of the water, her nose wrinkled with laughter; Robert dives in with a wild gleam in his eye and a wolfish smile and comes up with his black hair all over his face; Burgo squeals and hops without stopping; he carries on like billy-o with Robert, and there is a lot of horseplay and shouts of 'you dirty rotter!' Nicky sits demurely on the edge, naked but refusing to be coaxed into the water. Burgo's birthday tea followed.

It's extraordinary how even in what may seem the smoothest and most felicitous circumstances tiny signs may show that all is not perfectly well between two people, and irritate the inattentive ear like the faint buzzing of a mosquito or the drip of water from a tap. So it was that when Janetta and Robert decided to spend the golden evening walking to the tops of the downs, and indeed set off in that direction only to come to a halt in the field and stand there talking for almost an hour, something in the attitude of their dropping heads struck a chill into my heart. I felt it again when at dinner what sounded like a random remark of Robert's produced a sudden movement in Janetta, making her upset her glass of gin and vermouth and murmur: 'It's the last straw.' 'The last straw to what?' 'Just life'."

Later she remarks: "It would be strange if several years in prison camp left no tension, and Janetta told Ralph when they were picking fruit and vegetables to take to London that Robert was 'terrifically up and down'. Sometimes everything she did would be wrong. Then he would turn and blame himself. But why, oh why do human beings have to spoil the sweetness of companionship by tossing the burden of guilt and blame between them like some macabre

form of football? No lovers can escape quarrels, but these two are too exceptional for one to be aware of them without pain”.

And adds: “Both Janetta and Robert still haunt my mind like a tune that half delights me and half drives me mad. I don’t recognise any other human situation that has in my life affected me in exactly this way; and I find I am unable to sort out the threads which comprise it, nor decide which refer objectively to them and which more or less to myself, that is to feelings about my own youth”. Her intense fixation on the Kees and their marriage was to endure in a manner that could be uncomfortable for her and unsettling for them.

“We could have been very happy”, Janetta wistfully reminisced. Regrettably, the “emotional rage” that was consuming Kee had a comparable impact on her.

In an interview given in 2016, Nicky — who would become a successful painter — recounts that her mother sent her to boarding school. “She said to me recently that she knew I didn’t like that home, but she was so mad about Robert that she put me there for my own protection. She felt she was saving me. I remember crying and crying and crying. Still now, it makes me cry. If I’d talked about it 10 years ago, I probably wouldn’t have cried”. She does not deny that her anguish could be a form of denial: “I’m astonished at the power of denial. Even when I was little, teachers might say, ‘I understand you’re from a broken home.’ I was like, ‘That’s fine.’ ‘No self-indulgence’ and ‘nobody is special’ was what I picked up from my mother and her friends. I was in constant pain, but I didn’t recognise it. I had this wonderful act, acting cool, and it was gross denial. Gross denial gave me the strength to get through”.

Nicky “genuinely can’t remember” if Kee pushed her down the stairs, but she had a terror of stairs as a child. “He used to get hold of me and violently shake me, shouting, with his face very close to me. It was very frightening. He was jealous, resentful, maddened. For anyone else, he was charming, amusing and very popular”.

What was Janetta’s role in all this? Was she aware of the abuse? The fact that she sent her daughter to boarding school to “save” her would seem to corroborate this. Nicky herself discusses the circumstances that shaped her mother’s character: “Her own mother died while

she was pregnant with me and she hated her father. She was a lost, beautiful young thing in the war. She talks about me in rosy, romantic terms, what a wonderful, independent child I was — ‘independent’ is the biggest praise she can give anyone. That was just how posh parenting was in those days: children were seen and not heard”. Among other things, Nicky remembered her mother remarking of her father, Kenneth, “in a hopeless tone of voice”: “I simply couldn’t bear to touch him — too awful”, adding the gloss “And I don’t remember my mother touching me”.

Some time later she returned to live with her mother, although “Robert and my mother continued wanting to be rid of me”. According to Janetta, to have her back was permissible “because Robert no longer seemed so resentful of her existence”. In *Bringing Up Children* we can see a picture of an infant being suckled at the breast. “The love and affection a baby enjoys from being held in our arms is as important as the food he takes”, runs the caption. Solace was found at the country house, a permanent sanctuary cherished for its flower-filled gardens and communal meals, being often read to by Frances, or greeted at the station by Ralph in his car.

Janetta’s profound love for her children is unquestionable, but her preoccupation with men often took precedence over maternal duties. Nicky remembers being left alone at Sussex Place and other places while her mother attended rendezvous and social gatherings. Years later, when a similar situation occurred with a second child and another man, even faithful Frances remarked: “It is clear from her letters that Janetta is missing her children badly, but she has made no mention of their missing her”.

Feliks Topolski, ever susceptible to Janetta’s charm, recalled spontaneously calling her around this time. Shortly afterward, she arrived at his studio in Maida Vale on a bicycle with a bulging rucksack, “having meant anyway to leave her man on that day”. What followed was what the painter referred as “a charming and calm seven days of courteous bed-sharing”. Forty years later he could still remember seeing her from a bus walking back to the studio “through the mean Edgware Road crowding, uniquely unaffected, blonde, undeniably my mate, very beautiful, very desirable”.

There were other extramarital affairs of a similar nature. During a “paid holiday” picking apples in the countryside, Janetta became involved with a vacationing sailor, “more to prove to myself that somebody could still want to be with me than because I was in any way attracted to the young man”.

On 9 January 1948, while at Ham Spray, Kee informed the Partridges — to their satisfaction — that he would marry Janetta on the 20th of the same month. “Robert works hard at a German translation — Frances recorded —. It wasn’t until this evening after a bottle of wine and sitting over a roaring fire that he suddenly said what must have been for hours on the tip of his tongue: ‘I hope you are free on the twentieth’. We didn’t pretend not to understand that it was an announcement of their marriage, and Ralph said in a very melancholy voice which failed to conceal his emotion: ‘I suppose we mustn’t say how glad we are’. For however little one may believe in ceremonies, this one will surely be both a symbol and solid evidence of something that has every claim to make one glad. And happy planning for their party filled the rest of the evening”.

The wedding took place in Marylebone, London. Frances recorded in her diary:

“We had to catch the early train to be in time for Janetta and Robert’s wedding. Fine and frosty weather; a brilliant flame from a hedger’s fire, caster sugar covering the fields, and puffs of smoke coming from the mouths of men bicycling to work.

At Sussex Place there were flowers everywhere, champagne bottles on the white-covered table, and the old charwoman’s face cracked by a permanent smile. We walked with Janetta and Robert, and Janetta’s half brother Mark to the Registry office nearby. Back at the house again, wonderful food was appearing — oysters, smoked salmon, chicken mayonnaise. The guests swarmed in, as about sixteen of us in all; someone was filling my plate with food and my glass with champagne, while the heat of the fire brought out and spread abroad the scent of mimosa, so that the whole experience merged into one, and I was borne on the wings of semi-intoxication combined with the sympathetic feelings I have been simmering in all day,

through conversations with the other friends — Cyril Connolly, Angela, Julia, Diana Witherby, all of whom seemed as mellow as I felt”.

As we have seen, Evelyn Waugh did not hold Janetta in high esteem, but by 1947 he wrote to Nancy Mitford that she “has a new look: silk stockings, high heeled shoes, diamond clips everywhere”. Frances’ diaries meticulously track this upward trajectory. Spotted at a party in 1949, she is described as “looking lovely in a dress of grey watered silk”. A year later she is “looking so trim” in a camel coat with “new shoes, skirt and pullover”. By 1951, accompanied by her new and prosperous husband, she is depicted wearing “nothing but a little short green corduroy jacket over camel’s hair trousers”, the acme of Attlee-era ton.

A few months after her separation from Major Hewer-Hewitt, Angela Culme-Seymour received a letter. Dated in France shortly before the German invasion, it arrived at its destination five years later. The sender was her former lover René Guillet, Count of Chatellus, who asked for news of her and her family. Hundreds of memories came back; her affair with the count had been one of the determining factors in the failure of her first marriage. When contact was re-established, he flew to London to see her. “I remember René arriving with a basket of eggs — rationing was still strict in England”.

Two months later, Guillet de Chatellus proposed to her. The ceremony took place at the registry office in Passy, Paris, on 20 March 1948. Angela Culme-Seymour, ex-Lady Kinross, was to be Countess de Chatellus for ten years.

By her own admission, however, it did not take her long to realize that she was not the right type of woman for him. “The French demand a wife should be a well-organized ‘femme d’interieur’, with a clockwork-like domestic pattern, and few important interests outside the home. They have an absolute fetish about politeness. When Mark and Johnny were very little, if they forgot to kiss the hand of a woman they were greeting, it was considered a worse offense than telling a lie. The conventions irked me, too. Infuriating things such as ‘is not being done’ for a woman to sit alone in a cafe. I revolted and insisted on having the freedom women have in England”.

Angela evidently missed the lifestyle she had enjoyed during her marriage to Spencer-Churchill and the freedom contemporary with the time of the war. She painted, played the guitar, went to the bar at the Hôtel de Crillon where she hung out with *Evening Standard* correspondent Sam White and other journalists, and wrote a column on everyday parisian life for the celebrated *Woman's Own* magazine. It was there that she met her daughter Sally for the first time in ten years.

Eventually, the count became fed up with his wife's insinuating individualism. They divorced in 1958, but maintained a good relationship.

As we have seen, during the war Janetta had met the author of *Animal Farm* and *1984*. She remembered Orwell as an impulsive, hard-working man responsible for "endless Tribune articles", "a very serious, rather sad figure", parsimonious and solitary, "sympathetic but rather difficult to get on with". They once traveled together on the top of a bus, returning from a party at Connolly's: it was impossible to start a conversation. And adds: "Orwell was very odd, what he did... It was very complicated, his political life... I can't really follow it".

Shortly before his death, Orwell married Sonia Brownell, one of the secretaries at *Horizon*, where they had met.

The ceremony took place in Orwell's room at University College Hospital on 13 October 1949. Reverend Braine presided over the ritual. David Astor and Janetta acted as witnesses. Nearly forty years later, she recalled the scene: "His room was very small, and it felt crowded even though there were just a few of us. In the corner was a hospital trolley with a bottle of champagne brought by Sonia. Robert stood beside her, and David Astor and I stood on the other side of Orwell's bed. I don't think he ever got out of his bed. He sat up during the wedding, and I remember him smiling. He was beaming with pleasure. It obviously made him very happy, and I must say that I found the whole ceremony extremely moving". Another time I would refer to the scene in a more pathetic tone: "I could hardly watch them being married and I just stared at the bottle of champagne that I supposed we would drink afterwards. It was

awfully moving". Later that evening the group went to the Savoy Hotel for dinner, leaving Orwell in hospital (he died on 21 January 1950).

Meanwhile, in April 1949 Janetta gave birth to Georgiana, their second daughter. According to Frances, the pregnancy was an attempt to resolve certain conflicts in the couple; but, as is often the case, this was not enough. When they paid a weekend visit in May 1950, Frances noted: "Why aren't they happy together, I wonder? Complete satisfaction may be too much to expect at their age, but to hear them talk it seems that a lot is wrong with their life, and Robert has returned to his sad old habit of denigrating Janetta for incompetence, or what she herself calls her 'legarthy'. Her confidence is shaken and she defends herself half-heartedly, as if her chief aim was to avoid annoying Robert. This ghost train running along old railway lines is very disturbing. If Robert goes on writing down her character she will go off with someone who thinks her wonderful and tells her so, and there are plenty who will".

And on September 19:

"Ham Spray. Holidays over, we return to find ourselves once more deep in the problems of our friends, far the most agonizing being a new and it seems possibly final breach between Robert and Janetta.

During our absence in Spain the situation between the Kees had grown intolerable, and finally Janetta took wing to France. To us she wrote saying that she hoped never to return to married life, while a letter from Robert asked us to come to dinner and 'talk, talk, talk'. Such a break between two much-loved friends is as shattering as the sound of splintering glass in a road accident; Ralph and I felt the tragedy bitterly, and despite our aversion to 'taking sides' in matrimonial troubles, it was natural to try and give support to the person in most pain. While we were away I believe this had been Janetta, but she was now out of reach, abroad with no address, whereas Robert was urgently needing someone sympathetic to talk to, though he admitted that he had even felt a certain relief when she left — until, that is, he got the fatal letter saying she was never coming back. Then he followed her to France and talked to her for hours, but she was still 'adamant'. Turn and turn the facts as we might, Ralph and I couldn't

extract a favorable prognosis from them. According to the fiendish law that governs human emotions and makes what is unattainable much more desirable, Robert now desperately wanted Janetta back. Hearing all this, not once but many times on the telephone was, so I wrote, ‘unspeakably harrowing. I said what I could, which was little, begged him to come round and see us (but I don’t think he will), and went off to chop onions in the kitchen trembling so that I nearly chopped my fingers off in horror at the human capacity for inflicting and enduring pain’. Meanwhile life had to go on”.

And indeed, life went on in the mercurial figure of Derek Ainslie Jackson. Brilliant physicist, war hero, bisexual, millionaire and eccentric. Jackson's political views were so extreme that during the war, despite his distinguished service in the RAF, he came perilously close to being lynched by members of his own crew after he said they were fighting “against the wrong enemy”. In December, news reached Ham Spray that Janetta had returned to London, and that “Derek Jackson was pressing her to marry him”.

Nancy Mitford reported to Evelyn Waugh: “I call them the insect-women, oh aren’t they horrible and so *mal-élévées*. I mean Cyril brought Miss S[kelton] to a very small cocktail party I had and she sat and read a book! *Mauvais genre* they call it here. Then my brother in law Jackson has turned up with Mrs. Bluefeet, whom I haven’t seen since we met her together, with Mrs. Orwell in tow as a sort of dame de compagnie. All in corduroys and sandals. I can’t bear them”.

In *The triumph of hope over experience* (*The Spectator*, 2007), a biographical note on Jackson, Selina Hastings describes him as “a spectroscopist and also a jockey... one of the outstanding atomic physicists of his generation... He was only 22 when he produced a paper for the Royal Society (on ‘hyperfine structure in the arc spectrum of caesium and nuclear rotation’) that, as Simon Courtauld tells us, was recognised as a scientific tour de force, earning him a place in the history of atomic physics... His scientific research at Oxford did not, however, interfere with his other great passion — steeplechase riding — which led him from the fox hunting field to his first ride in the Grand National of 1935. A keen huntsman, he took up the sport again after the war, riding in two more Nationals after the war, the last time when he

was 40 years old... He was decorated with the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross), AFC (Air Force Cross) and the OBE (Order of the British Empire)... For the rest of his life Professor Jackson, appointed a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1947, lived as a tax exile in Ireland, France and Switzerland. He continued his spectroscopic work in France at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, and was made a Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur. Jackson had what might be called a colorful personal life. A 'rampant bisexual', he was married six times... Two of his race horses he named after inert gasses, *Niton* and *Xenon*, and he became a conspicuous figure in racing circles, not only for his dare-devil riding but also for his rudeness in the face of authority. 'Steward!', he would shout from the jockeys' enclosure, as though a passenger on a liner, ordering some dignified official to come and help him unsaddle. The jockeys, too, were taken aback by his eccentric behavior, not sure how to react to this odd character who kissed them in the weighing-room and showed off his painted toenails while taking a shower. But then Derek never made any secret of 'riding under both rules', as he put it, once so smitten with Desmond Guinness, then a ravishing schoolboy at Eton, that as a proof of love he ate the little chap's photograph".

In 1931, Derek married his first wife, Poppet, the daughter of Augustus John, a match strongly disapproved of by her father. However, the marriage was short-lived as the couple separated within months. His second wife was Pamela Mitford, sister to Nancy, Diana, and Unity. Not particularly bright but innocent and kind, Pam had little understanding of her husband's work — after typing out one of his papers, she said the only words she comprehended were "and" and "the". Despite their differing levels of understanding, Derek and Pamela shared a deep passion for horses and dogs, particularly long-haired dachshunds. Their mutual love for animals served as a primary means of communication, with Derek signing his letters to her with a horse's head and she responding with a doggie's paw.

Tragically, on the first day of their honeymoon, Derek received the devastating news that his twin, Vivian, had been killed in a sledding accident. For two days, he withdrew from everyone, refusing to speak about the loss. He never recovered from the shock of his brother's death.

Despite this profound tragedy, their marriage endured for 15 years, partly due to the upheaval of the war and partly because of Pamela's calming and supportive temperament.

Once war was declared, Derek was resolute in his determination to volunteer for active service, despite strong opposition from Lindemann, his mentor, who preferred to keep him grounded. Eventually, in 1940, he enlisted in the RAF, where his expertise proved invaluable in operating the new radar equipment to counter the German bombing offensive.

Night after night, Jackson flew missions with his squadron of Bristol Beaufighters, tasked with hunting down enemy targets, known as "customers". He demonstrated extraordinary accuracy in locating these targets using radar signals and showcased exceptional skills as a navigator.

Brilliant and courageous, Derek remained as subversive in war as he had been in peacetime. Not all of the pilots he flew with appreciated receiving instructions — "Rechts! Links! Gerade aus!" — in German, and he took pleasure in poking fun at his superiors. "A lot of people didn't get the point of Derek," remarked one fellow officer; however, another noted, "he turned many potentially dull evenings in the mess into hysterically funny ones".

In 1943, Derek orchestrated a particularly satisfying wartime prank involving his brother-in-law, Sir Oswald Mosley. Despite Mosley being a national hate figure and considered a dangerous security risk, Derek, indifferent to public opinion, invited him and his wife, Diana, to stay at his house near Banbury after Mosley's release from prison due to ill health. This audacious move made headlines across the country, prompting a furious response from the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, who demanded the immediate removal of the Mosleys.

Derek rebuffed Morrison's demands, asserting his right to invite whomever he pleased to his own home. He deemed it a gross impertinence for anyone to dictate his guest list, and he dismissed the suggestion that his guests might betray secrets to the enemy as outrageous. Shaken by Derek's resolve, Morrison backed down, and the Mosleys remained at the scientist's house as planned.

After the war, Derek relocated to Ireland and later to France, where he established his own laboratory outside Paris to continue his research. Following his divorce from Pam, he embarked on relationships with numerous women, some of whom he married. Notable among them was Barbara Skelton, a fascinating figure known for her fiery personality and titled connections. Derek also became involved with a Princess Ratibor, a devout Roman Catholic, prompting him to consider taking religious instruction despite his combative atheism (he always referred to God as “the bearded monster”); however, he gave up after the first session, claiming he “couldn’t swallow the story”. Subsequently, Derek met Janetta before ultimately finding solace with his last wife, a French widow in her thirties. The couple settled in Switzerland, where Derek passed away in 1982.

In *English Voices: Lives, Landscapes, Laments* (Simon and Schuster, 2016), Ferdinand Mount paints Jackson full-length: “When he began his affair with Janetta, he told her that the last person he had slept with was Francis Bacon — this, Courtauld hazards, on the night he gave Bacon and Anne Dunn dinner at Claridge’s before they all went to bed together. He also gave them £100 each, a lot of money in 1950. Only a few months after Princess Ratibor became his fifth wife, he complained to her cousin, the actor Peter Eyre, that she could be ratty and was frequently boring. Then he made a pass at Eyre. He took on tougher opposition with Number Six, the ferocious minx Barbara Skelton, part original of the lethal Pamela Flitton in *A Dance to the Music of Time*. She had already scored with a whole bestiary of sacred monsters. Jackson would boast that ‘after King Farouk, Cyril Connolly and George Weidenfeld, I was the pretty one.’ Skelton, like many of his wives and lovers and Jackson himself (his brother Vivian too), was besotted with animals. She was particularly in love with her coati, a raccoon like creature which she used as a weapon in her fights with Jackson in the Ritz, thrusting its wicked snout into his face, urging it to bite chunks out of his lip. When Janetta said the animal should be put down, she retorted, as animal fanatics do, that people who talk of putting animals down ought to be put down themselves.

Jackson loved horses as much as he loved dogs, indeed he was known to his friends as Horse. He went on competing in steeplechases until his sixtieth year, riding with short stirrups

like a monkey on a stick. He took part in the Grand National three times. My father rode in many chases alongside him, both of them often on horses trained by Captain Bay Powell. He admired Derek's dash rather than his elegance, in and out of the saddle.

For us children dragged along in his wake, Derek was not so easy... I found him an unnerving presence. He would set out to be genial and interested, perhaps thrust a fiver in your hand — he was always generous with his cash, not least to his ex wives, though perhaps not as generous as the divorce courts today would have forced him to be — but his glittering eye, his hurried, overbearing manner of speech, his South Welsh swagger betrayed such a volcanic impatience that it was impossible for you to be any more comfortable in his company than he was in yours. He had a wearisome itch to get a rise out of everyone, to upset or unnerve or frighten, especially while driving his Bentley or Mercedes, racing up to level crossings as the gates were closing, putting his foot down on narrow Irish roads until the needle crept up to ninety, and Janetta could not help crying out: 'No, Derek, please, not so fast.'

He did not want children of his own — too much competition. The same could be said about his loathing of God, 'that grey bearded monster'. His dislike of organized religion was so strong that he could not even bear to take an apartment which had a view of Notre Dame. He detested Bach and Mozart because they wrote 'church music', but adored Wagner. All this arose partly from his desire to shock. He asked Oswald Mosley, in the presence of two devout Spanish Catholics: 'Do you think Christ was a bugger?' He adored Mosley, perhaps even more so after Mosley had been disgraced and they were both living in exile in Paris. Jackson would always greet him with a kiss on both cheeks, followed by a sharp pinch on the bottom, a feat not easily achieved, since Mosley was about a foot taller; and one not much welcomed by the Leader, who was accustomed to do the bottom pinching himself.

Courtauld pitilessly records all the fascist spoutings with which Jackson liked to annoy people, his habit, even after the war, of singing the 'Horst Wessel Lied' in Austrian hostellries and referring to Hitler as The Great Man. He records too, without overmuch comment, the view of Jackson's friends that this was 50 per cent teasing. That may be more or less true

without constituting a valid excuse. In his milieu, such things could be said only in a teasing way. What strikes one, on the contrary, is that Jackson had a pretty complete fascist mindset, with the possible exception of anti-Semitism, which didn't interest him.

He was possessed by a fear and loathing of socialism. He was contemptuous of the lower orders who read the *News of the World* and paid for his racehorses and his wives, and he liked to bellow out Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Bow, bow, ye lower middle classes, bow, bow, ye tradesmen, bow, ye masses'. His visceral love of Germany was trumped only by his fierce patriotism. Typically fascist too were his intoxication with speed and danger and his dislike of the milksop *Sklavenmoral* of Christianity. At the same time, as fascists often are, he was superstitious, would not walk under ladders or work on a Friday if it happened to be the 13th. The worst event of his life — Vivian's death in the snow — had been foretold by a fortune teller in a nightclub.

Nor was the greatest obsession of his life, nuclear physics, incompatible with the fascist cast of mind. Since scientists are more inclined to veer to the extreme left, lured by the scientific pretensions of Marxism, it is often forgotten that fascists too worshiped science as something true and hard and modern. In a hazy light, therefore, one might identify Derek Jackson with the Übermensch, or on a lower plane with Zouch, the Superman who takes up foxhunting in Anthony Powell's *From a View to a Death*.

No journalist would be able to resist describing Jackson as 'a colorful personality'. Yet in a curious way he seemed almost colorless, evanescent. It is an inspired touch of Courtauld's to choose as his epigraph the anecdote of Derek at a nuclear physics conference in Rome in the 1970s strolling with a young English delegate who tells him that there's an extraordinary man at the conference, a brilliant physicist who had an outstanding war in the RAF and rode three times in the Grand National, and was fabulously wealthy and had been married six times. Jackson: 'I think I ought to tell you, before you go any further, that I'm the man in question.' 'Oh, really?' the young man says. 'I'm sorry, but we haven't been introduced.' 'I'm Derek Jackson.' Young man (after a pause): 'No, that wasn't the name'."

That was indeed Derek Ainslie Jackson.

Barbara Skelton, Connolly's wife from 1950 to 1956 and Jackson's wife in 1966 (albeit briefly), recalled some colorful anecdotes:

"The Ritz breakfast, oddly enough, was always a disappointment. The coffee never tasted freshly ground. So I bought a gas ring and grinder, and made my own. Derek had, as I have mentioned, his eccentricities. Instead of ringing for the floor waiter at drinks time, he preferred to buy a bottle of whisky, bring it in and only rang when he wanted some ice to be brought.

One evening, we took Jim and Larry to dinner at Maxim's. Afterwards we all went to a nightclub. Jim and I were rudely chattering across Derek who lost his temper, grabbed our two heads and cracked them together like a pair of walnuts. Whereupon I took Derek's hand and bit into his thumb. The next tiff took place at the Ritz. This time I snapped at my husband's lip. A doctor had to be summoned and Derek went about with a bandaged chin so that his loyal ex-wife, Janetta, assuming *Folie* to be the culprit, said to him, 'You ought to have that vicious animal put down.'

I wrote to Cyril: 'Tell Janetta from me she's a silly bitch. People who talk of putting animals down ought to be put down themselves. The coati is a sweet, docile little animal who hardly dares bite into a banana, let alone a pair of thin lips, and prefers snails, anyway".

In January 1951 Janetta was back in London. Frances remembered an encounter in those days:

"I had arranged to meet Janetta that afternoon at our hotel, the Great Western, and as I sat waiting for her my heart beat quite fast with agitation. She has been so long the unseen and unheard focus of our thoughts, conversations and conflicting feelings, that it was I supposed inevitable that a certain unresolved sediment remaining from all the pain and anxiety lay as it were before her door, and she must kick it over to come out. She came in looking very charming, and more like the Bohemian of past days than I expected; unconsciously affected probably by thoughts of Derek Jackson and Claridges. She was wearing nothing but a little

short green corduroy jacket over camel's hair trousers, in spite of the bitter weather. We went up to our bedroom and talked and talked until Ralph and Burgo returned. I think she was afraid I would 'take sides' — and not hers. When she had finished her account of the last months she asked 'Do you still hope I will go back to Robert?' It was true that we had hoped; now, seemingly, it was no longer possible. In any case we could only have wanted what made her happy. I don't think any harm was done by our talk. She has promise to come to Ham Spray in a few days, and after we had had tea with Ralph and Burgo sitting in the portly green leather hotel chairs, I saw her slip off into the night looking very defenseless against the cold and toughness of life, pale, thin and with a ghastly cough. I was left understanding more, and loving her as much as always.

*Charlie's Aunt* on our first night, *Traviata* at Covent Garden the next, and on the 4th we returned to Ham Spray with Janetta and her two children. We saw them arrive in the obscurity of Paddington Station, flanked by a supporting figure — Dereck Jackson. He greeted us with effusive embarrassment, and the hardly remembered flavor of his personality came wafting across: the over-excited manner, muffled speech, small bright intelligent eyes. He is not without a good deal of charm. Little Georgie was fussed and inclined to break into wails. Janetta looked even more ill than before, and very anxious".

Some days later she recorded: "The impression left by these five days is that with that gentle indomitableness that is so characteristic of her, Janetta is pulling herself out of a morass. Dereck seems to be the main figure in her life, but I would guess that 'love' is not what she feels for him at present. She and the children went to London one day to do Nicky's school shopping — she is going to boarding school".

Nicky had no better luck with Jackson than with Kee: "He had this great Buick and I was embarrassed — she recalls —. He sensed my embarrassment and drove round and round on the gravel in front of the school. He loved it". Jackson also gave the girl a catchy nickname: "Knickers". "Oh, God, he was ghastly — she continues —. I never liked him. He was quite happy to pay for me to go to school, he wanted to please my mother, but he didn't care a fiddle about me". He used to test her in maths, and rejoiced when she got it wrong. Maybe as a sequel,

Nicolette often confuses her numbers, even today. Re-encountering Jackson later in the 1950s and being asked if she remembered all the wonderful times they had had together, Nicky simply said "No".

Once more on the fringes of this part of her reality, Janetta left for Paris. On 29 March 1951, Frances noted:

"Mary rang up to say that she had heard from Derek Jackson that Robert seemed to be objecting to a divorce 'under instructions from Ham Spray'. As no one has ever mentioned the subject to us we were quite annoyed.

Later, however, Janetta rang up, in a much more confident and happier voice, sounding as though she would like to see us when we came to France. She then wanted to speak to Ralph. Would he ask Robert to divorce her? For legal reasons she couldn't do so herself.

Ralph: 'Does this mean you want to marry Derek?'

Janetta: 'No. I don't want to marry anyone. I never do'."

Anne Chisholm looks back on the events of those months:

"During 1950, as Frances and Ralph were uncomfortably aware, the Kees' marriage began to reel and crack in earnest. That summer, while the Partridges, along with Esmé Strachey and her daughter Vicky, were on holiday in northern Spain, Janetta left Robert and her two small daughters and went to France. She wrote to Frances that she longed to be free; meanwhile Cyril Connolly was pressing her to marry him even though he was in hot pursuit of his second wife, Barbara Skelton and soon the news reached Ham Spray that she was also being pursued by Derek Jackson, the rich, eccentric and extremely rightwing scientist and amateur jockey. Frances was distressed, both because she felt Janetta did not realize the effect of her disappearance on her children and because she thought very little of Derek Jackson, whom she had known slightly for years, first as the husband of Augustus John's daughter Poppet and then when he was married to Pamela Mitford. She described him crisply as 'Very substandard, with little to commend him as far as I can see except money and perhaps enthusiasm.'

Meanwhile, Robert was intensely unhappy and in need of support; she felt for him too, and found herself quite unable to give up hope that the relationship could be mended. She and Ralph did their best to tread the fine line between advice and interference, and spent many hours in intense discussion. 'I really feel', she wrote, 'both R[alph] and I have put all we know about the human heart and its sensibilities into our dealings with both Robert and Janetta in all this.' Soon other friends were drawn into the drama. Frances was irritated with the Campbells for seeming to favor Derek Jackson, and with Julia for repeating to Robert something Frances had told her in confidence; Julia, she thought, having never really found what she wanted from a man, was inclined to be hostile towards them and could not help being glad when a marriage collapsed. By December, it had all become too much. 'I am almost tired', she wrote, 'of setting down accounts of the life and death struggles of our friends with their mates.'

During the next few months, it became clear that Janetta was indeed involved with Derek Jackson; and in March 1951 she asked Ralph to talk to Robert about a divorce on her behalf. Slowly and reluctantly, Frances came to terms with the situation, and with Derek; the Partridges made a joint expedition with him and Janetta, the Campbells and Philip Dunn to the south of France in the late spring. As Frances wrote to Dicky soon after her return, this holiday was not a total success; Janetta was 'not the old Janetta, though she looked quite happy but so thin, tense, jittery'. There was too much drinking for her taste, and she disliked Derek's habit of doing loud imitations in French. She christened Dunn and Jackson 'The Tycoons'; their idea of foreign travel, she told Dicky, was 'to blaze about in huge cars making a great noise, e'pateeing the bourgeoisie'. She could not believe that Janetta was really in love with Derek; nevertheless, after the divorce from Robert came through in 1952 she married him. Later, Frances tried to analyze her instinctive dislike of Janetta's new husband. 'To be honest I believe that jealousy was partly responsible,' she wrote, 'a jealousy with regard to Janetta that had been completely absent in Robert's case... Almost a stranger, Derek carried Janetta off into a world of very different values from our own, and during her years with him she appeared to Ralph and me to be less 'herself' than at any other time'. Janetta minded Frances disapproval and disappointment. It was Ralph, she later said, whom she could really talk to at this time of great

confusion and unhappiness, Ralph who was unshockable and who understood the complications of her emotional life without judging her. Frances had higher expectations than he did of the people she loved”.

In May 1951, the Partridges and Robin Campbell traveled to France and met Janetta, Jackson and Philip Dunn in the village of Buis-les-Baronnies, where Jan had lived during the war.

Frances recalled: “We stayed in the inn where Jan had taken refuge and helped in the kitchen. The André family had been very fond of her and were longing to see Janetta. She and Derek arrived for two nights in a nine-seater Ford, and soon afterwards came the Dunns in a brand new monster with a wireless spouting *Mrs. Dale's Diary*. After they had all gone away Ralph and I talked with amazement and I must confess disapproval of their way of foreign travel. Robin was the only one who wanted to soak in his surroundings, walk about the village and into the fields. The others were perfectly content to sit in cafés all day long drinking endless pernods, talking loudly, seeming to expect local admiration and certainly getting it in the case of their cars. Derek kept up a good deal of buffoonery with imitations on French — sometimes funny, sometimes not. The André family welcomed him and Janetta most warmly and brought out old photos and books which Jan had left behind. I think she was very moved by this revival of Jan's ghost. She was looking very pretty in extremely short shorts, but thin and tense; smiling and friendly however. Everyone wanted to make things 'go' and on the whole I think they did”.

Back in England, Frances recorded in her diary on 14 February 1952: “Dined with Janetta at the Ivy: she looked happy, her face ironed out of strains, and was friendly and charming. It is probably true that I miss the girl of sixteen — my goodness how lovely! — who trudged round with her cloak and her stick and her 'disrespect' (a famous remark of hers was 'I disrespect you for what you've just said'); but I know it is senseless. Derek telephoned while we were dining and asked us to join him and Sonia at their restaurant. This we did, and drank brandy among a

smart crowd in funeral black arm-bands<sup>4</sup>. I still can't help thinking of Derek as a little boy, though a brilliantly clever one. His mind whirls like a mill-race but sometimes on little-boy things, and little-boy jokes amuse him. Sonia was keen to 'go on somewhere', so on we went — first to the Gargoyle and then to Claridges, where the 'Jacksons' were staying en route to Khartoum, with a packing case of scientific instruments, for Derek to do experiments on the total eclipse. At the Gargoyle we ran into Francis Bacon, lit up with drink, reckless, charming, giggling wildly. He joined our table, and turning to me asked, 'Don't you think Derek is the most marvelous person you know?' Next we were joined by Lucian Freud, who began a serious conversation with Derek about art and science, Derek's contribution to which was eager, amusing and paradoxical. Champagne was ordered and when Sonia, Lucian and I left Claridges it was two o'clock. Outside the front door two handsome, well-educated policemen were standing to whom Lucian remarked, 'I suppose you're here to prevent all the Kings getting assassinated?' (There are seven Kings and Queens here for the funeral.) The policeman looked down his nose and didn't deign to answer. We three took a taxi to Percy Street, but even at the door Sonia couldn't give up and they left me and drove on 'somewhere else'".

In a letter to Dicky Chopping, Frances returns to the meeting at the Gargoyle and provides further details: "I was up in London for 3 days over the King's Funeral time, partly to go to Quentin Bell's wedding party which was very gay with lots of champagne and dear old friends' faces. He has married a very nice, sweet girl, rather beautiful in a remote way, called Olivia Popham — who lived with painter Graham Bell, shot down in the war. So she goes from Bell to Bell. We dined after the party with Angelica [Grant] and Bunny Garnett and Julia and Lawrence [Gowing] and I thought all the old friends even with their gray heads were so gay and amusing and lively compared to the younger Gargoyle gin drinkers whom I had spent the evening before with. That was a very odd evening starting with my taking Janetta out to the Ivy tête à tête. Later we met Derek Jackson and Sonia Brownell at the Gargoyle — where we ran into Francis Bacon and his boyfriend and Lucian Freud and Francis Wyndham etc. etc. Bacon was most amusing and charming and stood everyone the champagne in a reckless way.

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<sup>4</sup> King George VI had died on 6 February.

I thought him delightful — [he] was kissing Derek with great passion as they sat on the banquette — and then would turn and say ‘we’re talking about Homosexuality, if you know what I mean’. The boyfriend was as light as an owl and blinked unceasingly. I can hardly imagine that even when sober he could have been other than repulsive. Lucian Freud is a queer chap isn’t he? — so deadly grave and self conscious looking; no irony, no light touch and it seemed to me a great desire to be rude for the sheer love of the thing. I can’t think how he gets so many rich girls to adore him — for he’s no oil painting either. In the end we fetched up at Claridge’s where all the Kings & Queens were staying and sat for a bit in Janetta and Derek’s private sitting room. It was hideous beyond your wildest dreams and the much vaunted log fire had gone out — I couldn’t really see the point of paying such vast sums for nothing better than you get at the G. W. Hotel... I had an argument with Freud going home, who seemed to think it all wonderful”.

When she was nine years old, in 1952, Nicky was reunited with her father by James MacGibbon, a publisher friend of Kenneth’s; she used to play with his son Robert, and adored them both. James, Robert and Kenneth planned to cross the Channel and visit Paris. It was James who suggested bringing little Nicky as well.

The child hardly knew her biological father, and as we saw, both Kee and Jackson had left something to be desired. It should come as no surprise that he idealized the figure of Sinclair-Loutit, the kind and sensitive doctor, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War who enjoyed an illustrious career with the World Health Organisation (“His life is an inspiration to all of us,” said a newsletter after his death). “I thought he must be wonderful,” Nicky confesses decades later.

She still remembers the excitement she felt when the ship sailed. But what was meant to be a warm reunion turned into a nightmare: her father abusing her in a small cabin. During the week-long voyage across the Channel to the Siena, the man abused his daughter repeatedly. “He specifically said it was something special between us,” Nicky recounts. The MacGibbons slept in a separate cabin and didn’t find out about it until she told them, thirty years later. They

were appalled. "I can rage at the image of him in his grave. I can't really speak to my father's [other] children, who don't really believe my father did anything, so there's anger there".

In 1958, she met him again in Paris. "He took me out to dinner and wanted the fantasy that we were lovers. I was terribly confused. He didn't lie on top of me and do terrible things like he did when I was younger, but I was certainly in an abusive relationship". More than ten years later, she blamed him for the abuse. "He cried and said, 'Yes, I was a terrible bastard' and he was so sorry. I even managed to feel sorry for him, but he tried to continue his sick relationship with me. He was never really sorry and he never really changed".

Back at the boarding school, she sought refuge wherever she could. "I felt saved by boarding school. I loved it but had to slightly pretend that I didn't, because my mother and her bohemian friends were scornful of school", she says. She was beaten by a math teacher before finding solace and friendship in the company of another. "He was wonderful, very inspiring," she remembered. "He loved me and I was very important to him". He took her on little excursions in his car and read *Under Milk Wood* and the Bible. The lessons continued in his bedroom, where several pupils joined him in bed. As his favorite, Nicky had to put her head on his chest. "Looking back, it was sexual, but it wasn't overtly sexual like my father's abuse".

One day, she was swimming, naked, in the lily pond in the school grounds (which, surprisingly, was permitted). She had reached puberty and the other pupils were envious of her breasts, but he said that she had "got too big" and "I wasn't this sweet little girl snuggled up to him". He put an end to their "special" relationship. "It was devastating. His rejection was like everything in my childhood. It wasn't said, so I couldn't reply, 'Please don't.' It just happened. Suddenly, I was never invited into his room again". She recalls his next favorite: a younger, skinnier pupil. "It was terrible," she says.

Nevertheless, Nicky does not see herself as a victim. "Funnily enough, being a victim is one of my mother's positions. My mother was quite clear, 'All men are bastards', but because of the abuse, if men wanted me that was wonderful". When she met her current husband, the author Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, she was "startled that he could be so kind". "The major thing he's

done is allow me to be myself and we've really, really loved each other ever since, so that's all right".

# Chapter 7.

On 6 August 1952, Frances recorded a trip to Ireland to visit Derek and Janetta:

"Ralph, Burgo and I have just passed a week in Ireland, our first stop being Mullingar where Derek and Janetta have rented for the summer a fine Georgian house in the middle of a spacious park, with mown lawns, clipped Irish yews and formal flower-beds, all very charming. Indoors — every comfort, and the days starting with breakfast brought to us on our soft beds. The country is too flat and featureless for pleasant walking, yet we eat and drink so much that we feel the need for it. Gradually we get the hang of the ideology of the house, which is Derek's, but if he is a dictator he is certainly a genial one. All animals get high marks for being dogs or cows as the case may be. Games are 'not socially OK'. The red rags which turned him temporarily into a bull are the Labour Party, God and the Royal family.

'Do you know, Burgo, what are the most important things in life? Be rich; *be rich*; and BE RICH'. And: 'Don't you agree that the point of making money is not to spend it but to make more money?' Is he teasing? I'm not sure. Burgo loves it, and Ralph is quite good at finding bridgeheads on which they can meet and agree. I am the least at ease with him, but one can't fail to respond to his friendliness; the trouble is that we don't want to be as rich as he is. Janetta seems happy and very relaxed".

Years later, Frances returned to Jackson's personality, making a broadly positive judgment:

"Almost a stranger, Derek carried Janetta off into a world of very different values from our own, and during her years with him she appeared to Ralph and me to be less 'herself' than at any other time.

What then did I leave out? I have not made it clear that he had a brilliant if specialized brain, nor was this obvious during ordinary meetings. It was true that he set what seemed to us a greatly exaggerated value on the possession of wealth, but it is only fair to say that he was much more generous with his own than any other rich man I have known, both by coming to the rescue of friends in trouble and by giving presents of cases of superb claret to those hardly more than acquaintances. His work as a physicist was what occupied the center of his life, and his chief extravagances were a spectroscopic laboratory in France, race-horses, good wine and French Impressionist paintings, of which he had a fine collection.

After his divorce from Janetta I naturally saw much less of him, until their daughter and his only child Rose began to grow up. During the later years of his life he evidently had a happy relationship with her<sup>5</sup>, he always visits her when he comes to England. I met him at her house a number of times and grew to like him more and more and appreciate his geniality and comic style of talk".

At this point it should come as no surprise that the end of Janetta and Derek's union was nearby. What was unbelievable, however, was the reason that triggered it.

Seven months pregnant, Janetta proposed to her husband to attend the Travellers Club's summer ball in Paris in the company of her half-sister Angela. The crush was immediate and Derek began an affair with his sister-in-law.

Two months later, in August 1954, having left Angela in Britannia, Jackson went to London (where Janetta had just given birth to Rose), and informed her that he was leaving her. He did indeed leave with Angela, and they settled on the outskirts of Paris, where another of his friends lived: Diana Mitford, Oswald Mosley's wife. Three years later, Jackson also left Angela.

In *English Voices: Lives, Landscapes, Laments* (Simon and Schuster, 2016), Ferdinand Mount comments: "Even Diana Mosley, Jackson's best friend, had to concede that he wasn't

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<sup>5</sup> When Rose was just a baby, Jackson lamented that her attributes included "the wrong colour and the wrong sex". Lucian Freud, for his part, commented: "When Derek saw it was a girl he ran away because he was a queer". However, the subsequent judgment seems to be unanimous: he was a proud, and within his own limitations, loving father.

quite human, and it takes one to know one... On the day Janetta gave birth to Rose, his only child by any of his wives, he ran off with her half-sister Angela. When he dumped Angela three years later, he did so over lunch in the same restaurant in which he had persuaded her to leave her husband".

This was a real catastrophe; Janetta was so shocked that she filed a petition for restitution of marital rights, but later withdrew. Despite Jackson's protests, they divorced in 1955. However, Janetta gained significant material benefits from the separation. With the proceeds from the divorce settlement, of which *The Evening Standard* noted that she "cites a relative but is allowed to keep the name secret", she was able to establish herself and her three children in a residence on Montpelier Square in Knightsbridge.

Rose remembers receiving a goodnight kiss from her mother "through an aroma of Gitane, whiskey and Chanel No 5". And Nicky adds: "When my sister was born, Derek went off with my mother's sister. My mother was devastated and miserable. It was all very frightening. The big question of my childhood was to help her be happy — it was the wrong way round, but that's how it was".

Frances wrote in her diary: "Because it altered the course of Janetta's life entirely, the distressing fact must hear be recorded that on the very same day that her baby, Rose, was born, direct telephone to say that he had a fallen in love with someone else and intended to throw in his lot with her, leaving Janetta still weak from the birth and completely shattered by this cruel desertion. Ralph and I felt very far from clinically objective about this harrowing situation, and it was some time before the seed of relief that the marriage was over could develop into a thriving plant. We had never happily accepted it. Of course we did our best to support and sympathize. Janetta told us that she thought Derek broke the news as he did out of a feeling that if one is going to be beastly one had better be really *beastly*. With amazing fortitude she wrestled with the practical problems confronting her, moved into a furnished house and sent for Nicky and Georgiana from France".

Years later, in her memoirs, Angela was so embarrassed that she refers to the episode in a terse paragraph, as if in passing, omitting to name both Jackson and Janetta: "A new lover I was mad about joined us in Brittany, and then we lived together in France until he left me three years later. It had all caused so much pain and misery to those he had abandoned, and finally me too, that there was little happiness during those years. Many people said it served me right and I dare say it did. Others wouldn't speak to me. Only the lover went unscathed and went on to marry two or three more people. In the end I wished to God he had never wanted me or I had never given in. It makes me sick, even now, to remember and write about it". She admitted bluntly: "I was vache, ungrateful, promiscuous". On returning to London, Angela felt the emptiness around her. Many of her friends and acquaintances turned their backs on her, with the exception of Anne Hill, her lifelong friend and wife of Heywood Hill (owner of the eponymous bookshop). Janetta never saw Jackson again, and it would be 27 years before she re-established contact with her sister.

Janetta would enter an even more turbulent emotional phase in the years to come. She had three daughters to raise and educate, and once again, she was on her own (not counting the stalwart support of the Partridge family). Robert Kee was trying to get back into her life, and as Frances pointed out, there were "frantic lovers sobbing down the telephone" at her Montpelier Square home.

A great number of men followed Jackson in the years to come. Among them were the Hungarian novelist and journalist Arthur Koestler; the philosopher Alfred Jules "Freddie" Ayer, one of the fathers of logical positivism; Lucian Freud; Ivan Moffat; Patrick Leigh Fermor, writer, scholar, soldier and polyglot; Andrew Cavendish, 11th Duke of Devonshire; Ralph Jarvis, banker and music lover; the writer Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy (future husband of his daughter Nicky); and the Spanish aristocrat Jaime Parladé y Sanjuanena, 3rd Marquis of Apezteguía.

As a very young man, Koestler witnessed the revolution led by the communist leader Béla Kun, which left a strong impression on him (in his own words, he considered himself a "romantic communist"). He later enrolled at the Vienna University of Technology to study engineering and joined a Zionist student fraternity.

Between 1926 and 1931 he traveled in Palestine, Paris and Berlin. Money and food were often scarce, and the young adventurer depended on the kindness of friends and acquaintances to survive. In 1931 he took part in the polar flight of the Graf Zeppelin, which took a team of scientists and American aviator Lincoln Ellsworth 82 degrees North (and not to the North Pole), Koestler being the only journalist in the group.

In the early 1930s he joined the German Communist Party, and in the years that followed he devoted himself to studying and dealing with issues related to his new ideology.

In 1936, when war had just broken out in Spain, Koestler visited Franco's barracks in Seville on behalf of the Comintern, pretending to be a sympathizer of the "national side" and presenting credentials from the *News Chronicle*. There he verified the effective participation of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the conflict, which at the time the rebels preferred to conceal. After being recognised and denounced by a former German colleague, he was forced to flee. Back in France, he wrote *L'Espagne Ensanglantée*, which he later incorporated into his book *Spanish Testament*.

Back in Seville, he was arrested a year later, shortly after the fall of Malaga, and spent several months in prison, with the real prospect of being sentenced to death. He was finally exchanged for the wife of the aviator Carlos Haya, thanks to the mediation of the Foreign Office.

Koestler traveled to France, where he wrote a sex encyclopedia to earn money, under the pseudonyms "Drs A. Costler, A. Willy and Others". The work, entitled *The Encyclopaedia of Sexual Knowledge*, was a success.

In July 1938 Koestler finished his novel *The Gladiators*. That same year he resigned from the Communist Party and began work on a new book to be published in London in 1941: *Zero and Infinity*, in which he denounced the Stalinist purges and Moscow trials, revealing his bitter disappointment with the Soviet ideals he had defended years earlier.

In 1939 he married the sculptor Daphne Hardy and they settled in Paris, where she translated *Zero and Infinity* from German into English. In fact, it was she who rescued the manuscript when they hastily fled the country in the face of the German advance, and arranged for its publication after arriving in London.

After spending some months in prison on suspicion of espionage, Koestler volunteered for active service. While awaiting his summons, between January and March 1941, he wrote *Scum of the Earth*, his first English-language work. Over the next year he served in the Pioneer Corps.

In March 1942 he was assigned to the Ministry of Information, working as a scriptwriter for propaganda broadcasts and films. In his spare time he wrote *Arrival and Departure*, his third novel, and several essays. Among them, *Disbelieving Atrocities* (originally published in the New York Times), in which he discussed Nazi atrocities against Jews.

In 1943 he separated from his wife, with whom he maintained a good relationship until his death.

In December 1944 he traveled to Palestine with credentials from *The Times*. There he met clandestinely with Menachem Begin, the head of the paramilitary Irgun organization, who was wanted by the British (there was a £500 bounty on his head). Koestler did all he could to prevent a military attack and to achieve a two-state solution for Palestine, but his attempts were in vain. Many years later he would say: "When the meeting was over, I realized how naïve I had been to imagine that my arguments would have even the slightest influence".

When he returned to England, he joined Mamaine Paget (owner of the studio where *Horizon's* editorial office was located), with whom he had begun a relationship some time before.

In 1948, when war broke out between the newly created state of Israel and the neighboring Arab states, Koestler moved to the country with his wife. After four months in Israel, they decided to move to France. While there, he learned that he had been granted the coveted

British citizenship, so in early 1949 he returned to London to take the oath of allegiance to the crown.

Koestler and Mamaine returned to France shortly afterwards, where he wrote a contribution to *The God That Failed* and finished *Promise and Fulfillment*. In the same year he also published *Insight and Outlook*, which, like the previous works, was received with little enthusiasm by the critic.

He began work on *Arrow in the Blue*, the first volume of his autobiography, and hired a new part-time secretary, Cynthia Jefferies, who was to become his third wife.

In June Koestler gave a remarkable anti-communist speech in Berlin under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an organization funded (though he did not know it) by the US Central Intelligence Agency. In 1951 the last of his political works, *The Age of Longing*, was published, in which he examined the post-war political reality of Europe and the problems it faced.

Koestler had agreed to an amicable divorce with his first wife, Dorothy. This cleared the way for him to marry Mamaine Paget on 15 April 1950 at the British Consulate in Paris. But in August 1952 his marriage to Mamaine collapsed. They separated, and remained close until she died suddenly in June 1954.

In May 1953 Koestler had bought a three-storey Georgian house on Montpelier Place, a few blocks from Janetta's house.

Around this time, after his separation, Koestler wrote: "When oh when, am I going to change back from the life of Decoration to the life of the Spirit?" Judging from his diary entries, he maintained a teenage obsession with sex and romance. On 20 October he noted: "Janine back again; Cynthia en arise", Barbara "threatening next Thursday", Priscilla "unhappy because neglected", while "Janetta gives me a sign" and was therefore "the only desirable one".

Michael Scammell, in his book *Koestler: The Literary and Political Odyssey of a Twentieth-Century Skeptic* (Random House Publishing Group, 2009), refers to the courtship between Koestler and Janetta:

"That winter [1953] Koestler developed an obsession with Janetta Jackson, a young woman he had first met in the *Horizon* offices during the war years. Slim, tomboyish, and seemingly waiflike but with considerable self-possession and dignity, Janetta was irresistibly attractive to men (Connolly had had a crush on her for years). Her third husband, the millionaire Oxford professor of spectroscopy Derek Jackson, had left her for her younger sister soon after Janetta had given birth to their baby. She was in poor shape when Koestler met her at a party given by the literary agent Barley Alison, and they talked long into the night. Not long afterward, Janetta moved with her three children into a house on the other side of Montpelier Square, making her a virtual neighbor.

Like Priscilla, Janetta was not particularly attracted to Koestler physically and she still remembered him from the war years as 'a very sad and beaten down little man in a Pioneer Corps uniform that was much too big for him,' standing in a corner of the room at one of Connolly's parties. But now he was rich and well dressed, and she found herself fascinated by the intensity of his personality and the brilliance of his conversation. As a new mother abandoned by her husband, she was more vulnerable than usual, and soon they were sleeping together. They had plenty to talk about. Janetta had spent part of her childhood in Spain and during the civil war had escaped from Malaga around the time Koestler had arrived there. She and her mother had then lived in France, and like Koestler had left to escape the German occupation. But Janetta was by no means the 'sweet and fading' flower of Koestler's imagination, and his new obsession led to 'a month of hell and heaven.' It began with 'ten wonderful days in Cornwall,' during which she inspired him to perform 'on average twice a day' and he was able to discard his reading glasses — which he attributed to her aphrodisiac powers. But she was hard to pin down, and back at home in Montpelier Square, he found it impossible to work with her sitting only a hundred yards away, 'not because I love her so much, but because her casualness continues to hurt me.'

He talked her into taking a trip to Paris, Vienna, and Salzburg with him. Vienna was unrecognizable, and he failed to find a single acquaintance from his old life. The Jews were almost all gone, and the old literary and journalistic establishment had been decimated. He was drunk when they boarded the train to Salzburg, and when they passed through the Soviet-occupied zone of control, some Russian guards dozed in the next compartment. Suddenly Koestler grew violent, cursing the Russians and threatening to go next door and beat them up. Janetta tussled with him in the corridor and finally prevailed on him to return to their compartment and quiet down, but she was 'frightened by such rage and madness, by someone who was suddenly and totally out of reach of reason,' and sensed the depth of his loathing.

After their return home, Koestler worked himself into a terrific lather over Janetta's aloofness and indifference, filling page after page of his diary with a detailed account of her comings and goings, and speculation about whether she loved him. Over a drink, Janetta told him, 'I can't, I won't, I don't want to' get involved, and they quarreled so violently that Koestler slapped her as she left the house, phoning afterward to apologize.

He sat up all night writing her an anguished seven-page letter that he didn't send. In its place he sent a short note asking her to marry him: if the answer was yes, she should ring before noon. Janetta was amazed and horrified. She had no intention of marrying Koestler, and she didn't ring. They made up, and she eventually spent the night at his home 'for the first time ever,' but when she refused to go to France with him again, he suddenly lost interest, telling himself he 'hardly cared' anymore. He later put it down to 'a shattering change-of-age crisis.' 'Had I not decided to leave London I would at least have had a nervous breakdown, if not a car accident or a similar self-destructive manifestation. For the first time in [my] life I felt it would be worthwhile to hang or do 20 years in jail for killing a woman.'

Janetta knew nothing of these murderous impulses. Years later she said that Koestler's attitude to her had been 'an odd mixture of consideration, thoughtfulness, and extraordinary brutality.' 'He was not the sort of man who was systematically violent to women or got pleasure out of it. It was just that he sometimes lost his temper and slapped you. But then,' she added philosophically, 'you always finish by hitting one another in the end, don't you?' She

recalled an incident when she had offered him a cigarette. ‘Oh no,’ said Koestler, ‘I never accept a cigarette from a woman, it’s so disgusting. It always smells of scent and lipstick.’ Janetta reminded him that she wore neither, but Koestler insisted: ‘Oh no, I have a very strong sense of smell.’ Janetta concluded he was a woman hater at heart. He feared and was disgusted by women but loved their company too — so long as he thought he could manipulate and control them”.

On 6 January 1954, Frances wrote in her diary: “Janetta came to us for the New Year week-end. She is back in trousers, she is back in her original self. An appetite for life is returning to her, but is not much stronger than her appetite for food, which probably symbolizes it. She is very thin, even fragile-looking and seems to have a pleasure in doing without things like sleep or food, which reminds me alarmingly of Jan. One day, awakening from a short nap on the sofa, she began talking about the importance of loyalty to people you were fond of, especially if you were aware of their failings and that not everyone liked them”.

The relationship with Koestler lasted until the end of 1954. In *Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind* (Free Press, 1998), David Cesarani alludes to the rupture:

“Koesder’s [sic] life in London soon returned to what passed as normality for him. He bussed around the house restoring it to order and went through two charladies in a week. He began work on the volume of essays he had been mooting for half a year, resumed dining out and sleeping around. On 5 September he marked his forty-ninth birthday with a party and went out to dinner with the novelist Henry Green and his wife. He bought a new car, collected it on 13 September and ‘bruised’ it five days later. He had a much more serious accident in November, following a mellifluous dinner with Connolly, whom he had never stopped seeing despite their wariness of each other. After little more than two weeks back he was ‘on the wagon’ again. He had what he described as ‘occasional meetings and sleepings with Janetta, but now unimportant as her pathetic preciousness rather repellent and boring’. And he started a risky affair with a ‘Park Lane acquaintance’. Janine Graetz visited in September-October, the first time they had seen each other since the end of August when Graetz made a ‘staggering disclosure’ to Koesder. It was the news that she was pregnant. Although he complained that

she was ‘aggressive and unpleasant’ their encounter was ‘less painful than expected. Fortunately for him, her husband assumed the child to be his own and she managed to remain within her extremely comfortable milieu.

After this shock he commenced what he called, rather misleadingly as it turned out, ‘the great discarding.’ Proclaiming that the ‘phase of greed’ was over, he set about rationalizing his affairs, as he had tried to do in the summer Mamaine left him. But for all the ‘absolutely final’ rows with Graetz and Jackson he continued to see them both, while adding a level-headed young woman called Gillian Richardson to his roster of female company. Richardson, who worked in publishing, was ‘completely middle-class’ and imported a temporary stability into his life”.

True to her personality, between travels and quarrels with Koestler, Janetta found time for a brief affair with the positivist philosopher Alfred J. Ayer, one of the most committed disseminators of the theories of the Vienna Circle in the Anglo-Saxon world. In his *magnum opus*, *Language, Truth and Logic*, published in 1936, he defended the main tenets of analytic philosophy, in particular the strict doctrine of verification; the complete separation between logical (tautological) and empirical statements; metaphysics as a mere set of pseudo-propositions, i.e. “absurd” statements; and, finally, the need to reduce philosophy to strict and hard analysis.

Ayer was a friend of the Partridges, and in those years was a regular visitor to Ham Spray. He met Janetta through Koestler himself, and they shared a holiday in the south of France. She would define him years later as “touching, slightly comic and alert as a fox terrier”. Janetta recalled “...how he hated to lose in a game. Even good-humoured un-grand croquet — at Stokke — made him desperate to win, so that it was awful, on a doubtful day, to be his partner... We had a warm detached easy relationship, talking a great deal about everything which I loved. His decisiveness, his sure and definite way of expressing himself, after that very characteristic initial hesitation, was enormously enjoyable”.

Ayer, for his part, mentions her in his autobiography *More of My Life*: "When Koestler invited me to watch the Hungarians play at Wembley he also invited Janetta Jackson, a clever and attractive girl with whom I shared many friends before we became lovers. Janetta had been married to Humphrey Slater and to Robert Kee and was then married to Derek Jackson, a friend of Philip Dunn the tycoon, equally rich and even more reactionary, an outstanding amateur jockey and, much more surprisingly, a first-rate spectroscopist. He and his brother had been the prize pupils of Professor Lindemann at Oxford".

Another of her lovers in those years was the banker Ralph Jarvis, former lover of her sister Angela in the early 1930s, who had then served as station chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (better known as M16) during the war, based in Lisbon.

He and Janetta met in June 1954, and Frances commented: "Janetta came here last night with Ralph Jarvis, an easy, pleasant, civilized man whose humorous vein reminds one that he is a relation of the Gathorne-Hardy family. Ralph and I both think he is greatly taken with her".

El 16 Frances relata en su diario que Janetta había sido llevada a la London Clinic e intervenida de urgencia. Al otro día pudo hablar con ella: "'Peritonitis', the tiny tearful voice went on. 'They didn't know what it would be when they put me under — probably appendix, but they had taken most of my insides out. I thought I was dying and I didn't really care, and when I woke up and found I had it all to do again I felt faintly disappointed'."

Anne Chisholm reports:

"Not long after, Janetta was taken to hospital with peritonitis; she came to Ham Spray to convalesce. Frances and Ralph loved to look after her; they tried to remain detached from her complicated love life, although they could not help it when their hearts lifted at the slightest sign that she and Robert might be reconciled. When Janetta recovered, she needed someone to help her drive down to the South of France, where she had taken a house for the summer. Her latest conquest, Ralph Jarvis (it was all rather awkward: his wife was a cousin of Anne Hill's, and his daughter a friend of Burgo's), was a possibility, as indeed was Robert, but in the end the task fell to Ralph. Frances was not fooled by his simulated reluctance: 'He is inclined to

preen himself on travelling with a lovely young woman who will be taken for his wife. "More likely your daughter" I say snubbingly', adding that although she hated him flying or driving long distances without her, 'it is the right thing and it is mainly my doing that he goes'. While he was away, she had three young musicians to stay: her nephew William Garnett, Pippa Strachey and Burgo's former tutor, Alan Tyson, who played the viola and composed a piece to be played to Ralph on his return. (Tyson was a brilliant young man, a philosopher as well as a Mozart expert, who was also helping James Strachey with the Freud Standard Edition.) When Ralph got back, she gathered that Janetta had struck him as 'a somewhat exigeante princess'. Janetta and her love affairs are mentioned quite often in Ralph's letters to Gerald in the 1950s, always fondly, sometimes a touch cynically; he professed relief that his own life was not so complicated. 'Don't you congratulate yourself at times at being out of the hurly burly of sex?' In fact, Gerald sustained a keen interest in sex as he grew older, and rather enjoyed making this plain to his old rival".

Another diary entry, dated 12 July, reveals Janetta's state of mind and health:

"Janetta lay on the chaise-longue in the sun turning over her problems and helping us to turn over ours. Hers are the most pressing. Having tried every motor-drivers' examining board in turn to get herself a test, she has so far failed to find one, and after frantic telephoning ran out in tears to Ralph who was picking pears. She needs to have her car for her stay in the house she has rented for herself and the children in Cagnes, and constant jangling of hows and whys in her head have left her looking iller than when she first came to us. I seem to hear the rattle of wooden beads such as children have on play-pens, as we clicked the tangible segments of our problems to and fro, trying out different combinations to reach a solution. Ralph is already envisaging that he will 'have to' drive her down, something I refuse to pity him for.

Meanwhile Janetta has gone off for a night in London to go to a 'grand party decorated in jungle style with about twenty stuffed monkeys,' looking much too fragile in her best silk frock; and I have woken feeling stronger after a splendid sleep, and have got out the index box and made a start on the next volume of Freud which arrived two days ago".

On the 22 she noted: "To London for the Memoir Club and to see Janetta's new abode in Montpelier Square, an experience that has the effect of witnessing a rising temperature. By afternoon I was about 103° myself, after driving with her to Maples and spending over an hour helping her choose beds, mattresses and pillows. Back at Alexander Square, the telephone rang, rang, rang. Likewise the door-bell, and I let Ralph Jarvis dress as a city man in a bowler hat and rolled umbrella. He took Janetta off to *Rosenkavalier*, and when I returned from the Memoir Club I found them munching in the kitchen, Janetta looking exhausted and with a headache but busy cooking eggs. I wasn't sure that Ralph was being as supportive as he might, or realizing that she must leave London as soon as possible — it's killing her. She had miraculously passed her driving test and could go next week, but obviously needs a companion to share the driving. Ralph's line was 'driving would simply *kill* you, and what would poor Nannie do then, poor thing?'"

The next day's entry reveals the presence of Robert Kee: "Eating breakfast with Janetta, the sun streaming through the window, we discussed the question of who should drive out with her. Robert? He had agreed when the idea was first put to him, but retracted the next day, saying he couldn't undertake to go lightly as it were. She felt it would be bad behavior to try to persuade him, so quickly withdrew. They have been meeting with apparent friendliness; all the same he said no, and work was the reason he gave and is no, I believe, his guiding principle. I was cast down to see this shining chink close".

Neither Janetta's spirits nor her prospects seemed to improve. In January 1955 Frances wrote: "Janetta was low with a cold, and voiced sad views of life: 'I don't like it one bit. I don't mean that I don't enjoy quite a lot of the things I do — I do, very much, but I keep looking up and hating what I see.' We are beginning to hatch a plan to take a house jointly for several months of the summer, in Spain perhaps or in Italy".

Finally, after seeing an advertisement in *The Times*, Janetta decided on northern Spain, and rented an old villa in San Fiz, near Coruña. The party consisted of her three daughters, the Partridges, with Burgo, and the nanny.

In July, Frances reported on her protégé's relationship: "I don't understand Janetta's attitude to Ralph J. one bit. He has pulled strings and got passages for the children, so he is to be rewarded by driving out with her, but she made no bones (when she was here) about not looking forward to the Spanish adventure. Her presence in the house was like an electric dryer blowing our hair straight on end. Her desperate restlessness makes one draw short breaths and fail to sleep at night. From what we gather on life at Montpelier Square it has been beyond everything, with frantic lovers sobbing down the telephone and Cyril pacing her room all one night because Barbara has gone off with George Weidenfeld. Robert thinks her children show signs of lacking security, and that she should either center her life around them or do something quite different. I think he is determined not to get drawn in again himself; he as good as said he would come to Galicia only if she didn't, and her own reason for coming is not very heartening: 'I've nowhere else to be'. Why on earth do I feel so sanguine?".

Once in San Fiz, the travelers discovered that the rented villa belonged to Natalia Jiménez and her husband, friends of the Brenans who had taught Spanish at Oxford. Accordingly, they invited the couple, who gladly accepted.

On 11 August Jarvis returned to England. "Ralph Jarvis leaves today — says Fraces — and looked touching and sad in his smart traveling suit. He has been badly on Janetta's nerves at times, but is an endearing character". Two days later she wrote: "Janetta is a different person since Ralph J. left, much more relaxed and easy to communicate with. In any case one-sided love is a heart-rending spectacle".

One of those evenings, after dinner, the group went to a nearby village where a dance was being held. Frances remembered: "Ralph and I whirled round for a little among the tightly-packed dancers. Each of us picked up a strange character — Desmond [MacCarthy] a knot of boys, Janetta, a very young man with a permanent rosy blush, and I, a spanish version of Tom Mix. Dozens of brown, eager, wrinkled monkey faces gazed at us from very close range in amazed curiosity; there was a powerful smell of sweat".

On 28 August, they welcomed a friend of Burgo's, Jonathan "Johnny" Gathorne-Hardy, 22, and his cousin Caroline Jarvis, daughter of Ralph. "Johnny is interested in everything, starts general conversation going, has plenty of charm and is nice to the children". The younger members of the expedition decided to go to Portugal for a few days.

In her book *Half and Arch: A Memoir* (2004), Gathorne-Hardy recalled the trip, and takes the precaution of giving Janetta a pseudonym: Eliza Simons.

"The holiday was with Ralph and Frances Partridge and Eliza Simons, as she then was. They had together taken a large house for the summer in the village of San Fiz near Betanzos in northern Spain not far from La Coruña. Ralph Jarvis had just returned from there and before we left he took me out to dinner in London.

About forty-five, a banker in Hill Samuel, he was clever, subtle, devious, a man of urbane humour and extraordinary charm. He charmed me, flattered me, and soon began to astonish me. He revealed that he had been obsessively in love with Eliza for some time, but that recently their affair had begun to torture him, especially on his recent drive down with her and short stay at San Fiz. During the day, Eliza had been irritable, distant, cruel. At night, as passionate as ever. As he talked and talked I became aware that he was really begging me not to sleep with her myself. 'But Ralph — how could I? You said she was thirty-three?' Ralph clearly didn't see this as the insurmountable objection which, in my innocence, I then did, and he continued to try and charm me onto his side.

Fatal precaution. The journey out was a nightmare; some crash in Madrid had paralyzed the entire Spanish railway system and we spent three days and two nights in our non-sleeper, second-class compartment in stifling August heat. But I arrived, on 21 August, intensely curious about Eliza and, at least partly, in a way I certainly wouldn't have been if Ralph hadn't, in effect, suggested it.

The house at San Fiz was tall, lumpy and ugly like most Galician architecture, with a big, dried-up garden and big iron gates, no electricity or plumbing (water from a well) and three Spanish girls and a cook to look after everyone.

I was eventually to get to know most of that ‘everyone’ very well indeed, but at first they all seemed rather daunting, enviably civilized and clever and somehow very un-18 Hartington Road. Desmond Shawe-Taylor was staying, about to go. He had the face of an impatient cherub, a rattling quick mind, and used to sunbathe naked on a patch of parched grass in front of the house behind the gates. Crowds of ragged, barefoot village boys (poverty in Spain was terrible then) used to gather and stare in wonder at the distinguished music critic’s pale, sun-creamed body, which was no doubt what he wanted. (Desmond, among his many intellectual and human attainments, was extremely highly sexed. I remember him saying, when he was sixty-five, that he would still invariably get an erection from the movement travelling on top of a bus.)

A few days after Caroline and I arrived, Gerald and Gamel Brenan turned up. Gerald, I was told, was the author of the best books ever written on Spanish literature and the Spanish civil war. What immediately caught me was his conversation. In particular, I had never heard anyone talk about books like he did, as if they and their characters were real life — only often more important and interesting. Thirty-two years later, to my astonishment, I was asked to write his biography, which I did. Even at this first meeting, I might have come to hero-worship him, except that it isn’t, wasn’t, in my character; also Gerald was too human, could make himself too ridiculous. But I came to love him. Gamel too — with her caked white make-up to mask the ravages to her beauty (she was approaching sixty), her despair at wasted talent, her quick, gentle — with Gerald sharp — sense of humour and her odd habit of mowing as she crawled up the beach out of the rolling Atlantic.

The routine at San Fiz was ordered and we swam regularly in that Atlantic. Expeditions would sally out to beaches: Eliza’s three little girls — Nicky, Georgie and Rose; Rose, two, round and chubby, accompanied by a silent and colossal blown-up replica fifteen times her size — nanny; Caroline; Burgo, Ralph and Frances’s son, who could be rather difficult but who I got on with; for a while the Brenans and Ralph, Frances and Eliza. Ralph had only five years to live but his weak heart was impossible to detect or even imagine in his big, strong frame. One beach had a sandbar, a few feet below the water and about two hundred yards out, to which

Ralph would swim. Once, as he heaved himself upright out of the water to stand on it, a school of dolphins appeared and played about him and he stood, dripping, slightly bowed, looking like a god.

I was shy of him because he seemed both quick and formidable, and all men of his age reminded me of Jock. But one of the most sympathetic aspects of Bloomsbury was their concern with youth and their treating young people as their equals. Virginia Woolf's journals are always wondering — what does the *younger generation* think of this or that? I used to get flustered then, I still do, when asked what I *thought* of something — but with Ralph and Frances, and Gerald too for that matter, this aspect manifested itself in listening with interest, questioning, drawing out. Frances, in particular, with her sense of humour and silvery cascade of laughter not unlike Nell's, was particularly adroit. In our regulated life, the sherries before lunch, the drinks before dinner, but above all the meals that stretched out were as much a time for talk as for eating — though they all seemed to like eating, especially Ralph. Drinking was moderate.

Occasionally there were expeditions. Ralph took us all to a bullfight in La Coruña and paid for a box. Franco, who had been born nearby, was in the one next to us. I thought, if I'd brought a grenade with me I could change the course of Spanish history. Litri had come out of retirement to fight for him. I remember the great bullfighter half-kneeling, one thigh against the ringside so that he was trapped, and the bull whirling past him and tossing up the cape.

But the person who more and more fascinated me was Eliza. At twenty-two, or to me at twenty-two, a woman of thirty-three seemed impossibly much older; and though now both twenty-two and thirty-three seem little different (young men who fall in love with an older woman will find they eventually catch up), it is true in some ways the gap can be very wide to start with — especially between an attractive woman who had already had two husbands and a good number of lovers and me who was, in Christopher Fry's phrase, as near a virgin as makes no difference. Yet, Ralph Jarvis hadn't thought it was impossible. But it never occurred to Eliza at first, I think, until she and I, Burgo and Caroline went on a four-day expedition into Portugal. By this time, I was literally in a fever, running a temperature of about 100°, proof, if

proof is needed, that even the beginning of obsessional love is not like but actually is the onset of an illness. I must have said something, or just looked something one night when she put her head into my bedroom in some Portuguese hotel, and said goodnight. I remember the sudden speculative look that crossed her face.

The first night we were back at San Fiz she came down late into my small bedroom at the bottom of the house and got into my bed. After that, I crept up to her big room at the top of the house every night and got up and went back down to my own room before breakfast, which everyone except Ralph and Frances had in Eliza's bedroom. Then there were the long siestas, as the sun moved slowly round and I was perpetually amazed, so new was it all still, at the peace which passeth all understanding and my continual descent from the cross. And no one knew; no one even suspected.

On 18 September Caroline and I went back to England by train. Eliza had said she'd get in touch.

However, she didn't. I heard nothing. And I felt too proud, or too nervous of being humiliated and raising the distant, cold voice Ralph Jarvis had described so vividly, to ring or write myself. I realized it had been what people called a holiday romance and that was that".

On 15 September Frances reported the return of the youths: "Janetta and the three young returned from Portugal, looking brown, handsome, and having had a wonderful time. Johnny is very good for Burgo; he is also, I suspect, mad about Janetta".

Four days later: "Janetta had taken Gerald to Betanzos one day; they drank brandies and Gerald talked incessantly about himself, but his account to Ralph was: 'I got to know Janetta for the first time.'".

And on the 24: "The next day to lunch with Janetta who is picnicking in her new house with a few sticks of furniture. I get the impression that she is essentially a loner at present, except for her children to whom she is more maternal than ever before. Coming home from Cagnes through Paris she had lunch with Derek. He asked her not to divorce him, saying that he would

only make a fool of himself — he was good for nothing but work and that was nine-tenths of his life. At some mention of their life together he burst into tears".

On 12 October, Frances wrote: "Last weekend Janetta and Joan Cochemé [the painter Joan Souter-Robertson] met here. Joan was 'thunderstruck by Janetta, thought her almost perfect'. I must admit she glowed like the autumn days. I'm glad to say she feels, as we do, that San Fiz was a triumphant success. 'I tell everyone so. I hope you do too'."

Back in London, cocktail parties, nightclubs and lavish receptions followed one after the other. On 21 November, Frances recorded a meeting at Janetta's house: "It was so long since I'd been to a party that I wanted to see if the style had changed. Not really. A great deal of champagne and whisky was drunk, yet no one was 'drunk'. In Janetta's long room the noise grew rapidly more deafening until it became merely a matter of guessing at other people's remarks. What's the point of talking under such circumstances, I wondered, even while doing and enjoying it. A lot of very interesting distinguished-looking heads were silhouetted against the dark green walls. Homosexuality was represented by Cecil Beaton, Frances Bacon, Dicky Chooing; old-aged by Rose Macaulay; old friends by Mary, Heywood and Anne, Paddy Leigh Fermor, Cyril and Sonia. But when it was all done and we were back in bed there was less to ponder about than there is after a good evening's talk: just a noisy rush through a dark tunnel in a train with lights flashing past and quick glimpses of faces in other carriages".

On 6 February 1956 Janetta obtained a divorce from Derek Jackson. Having lunch with Frances and Kee, she asked him: "And is it rather nice to be free?". "Well, yes, it is", Janetta replied. Surprised, Robert said: "But the trouble is you will be in it all again in a minute". She just pulled a face at him; but her ex-husband had hit the nail on the head.

By March 1956 her relationship with Jarvis was over, and she was beginning a new affair with the very young Jonny Gathorne-Hardy, her San Fiz conquest. Janetta wrote to Cambridge at the end of the first half of 1956 and invited him to dinner at her flat. They took up what had begun in Portugal, although he did not settle in Montpelier Square until a year after leaving Cambridge.

Gathorne-Hardy recalled: "From then on, I went up to London every second or third weekend. This change of focus, which is what it became, was not helpful to work, though I did as much as I could. For the second part of the Tripos, I'd changed to English and I'd wished I hadn't. I find it hard to explain why. Certainly, I found writers I might not otherwise have done and became passionate about them".

"Although I had been seeing Eliza as often as I could while at Cambridge — he confesses —, when I came to London it was not to move in with her. Although this was what I really wanted, it did not take place for a year. The delay was partly the result of the paradoxes which underlay our affair, both intensifying it — and eventually destroying it.

Gerald wrote once that, since everyone knows that romantic love cannot last, there is always a sadness hovering at the edges of a love affair. In our case, it was more than the edges. We both thought that what we were doing was — in any permanent sense — 'impossible'. The fundamental reason was my conventionality — at some point I wanted to marry and have children and a family which I supported. Eliza couldn't have any more children and, thanks to massive alimony, was rich while I was poor.

There were peripheral reasons. Gathorne had not been right about my dragging the family name in the mud, but as the year succeeded I was aware that my mother became increasingly agitated — though the agitations of parents over what they see as their children's unsuitable liaisons usually serve to cement them. Eliza, too, came in for disapproval. By chance or inclination, her men before me had usually been ten or so years older than her. Jealousy is the last emotion to die, and these (as I saw them) aged figures in their mid-forties resented my arrival. Perhaps they felt threatened by what Montherlant (was it?) called the insolent avidity of youth. There were those who had not been lovers but had hoped to be, and now the way was blocked — or made more difficult.

Cyril Connolly, in particular, seemed to find my new role an increasing irritant. I remember Eliza coming back very upset once after he had attacked her. *How did he attack you, I asked.* 'Well, one thing he said was, if all I wanted was sex out of a toothpaste tube...' said Eliza,

nearly crying. I could see this was insulting, both to her and to me; at the same time I felt vaguely flattered. ‘Do you suppose he was thinking of those new large-size Colgate tubes?’ I said. ‘What do you mean?’, said Eliza uncomprehending. ‘Nothing. Nothing. Doesn’t matter.’ We went to stay the weekend with Arthur Koestler and, after a good deal of drink, his aggression became evident. Indeed, I’m not sure jealousy ever stops. Ralph Jarvis, who died in 1973, never spoke to me again. And with one or two of those men who have survived, now truly ancient, into their eighties, and though it all took place over forty-five years ago, I am still sometimes aware of latent hostility.

We went to a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden and I remember looking at her and seeing tears running down her cheeks and knowing why — and it made the opera more painful, more poignant and more powerful. And so with everything else. Besides, I couldn’t, then, bear to leave her. Why, after all, should our affair be so ‘impossible’? I was in love — obsessed and fascinated; and fascinated also by everything we did. In my brief holidays from Bensons, we went to France and Spain and Morocco — none of which I knew. Her whole way of life was totally unlike the Arch or 18 Hartington Road; and my finding it new and exciting made it new and exciting for her again.

I lived, when not with her, in a series of temporary dwellings. The first of these was in Lennox Gardens. My grandmother had given birth to Jock in Lennox Gardens in 1900. After a while they kept a cow in the mews to supply milk. But I was lent a capacious flat by a Cambridge friend, Robert Loder, at the top of the Loders’ family house. I was living here when I saw Pirandello’s *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

The play fascinated me. I remember going up onto the roof of the Lennox Gardens flat and talking to someone — perhaps it was Robert — nearly all night. I remember the dawn rising over the roofs and the milk float with its clinking bottles doing its round far below under the trees. But what eventually intrigued me far more was how I soon forgot the substance of the play and gradually created what I saw as my own memory of the beginning of it, the actors wandering near the dimmed stage waiting to go on. It was this play, my play, I never forgot.

After Lennox Gardens, I rented a series of small bedsitters or sometimes just bedrooms. Not till I joined a friend, Richard Williams-Ellis, in Carlton Mews, was I settled.

I went to Montpelier Square several times a week, often quite late after spending the evening somewhere else, and Eliza and I went away for weekends".

On 18 June 1956 Frances wrote in her diary: "Janetta told me that during their last visit to Ham Spray Robert had launched one of his great thundering depressing tirades against her way of life, her selfishness and how she brought up her children. She has been crushed and deflated by this wigging, and the worst of it was that he was not cross while delivering it, but seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself. It reminded her of the old days with him and how desperate it had been trying to make a good, gay life under that withering fire, and I think it has finally convinced her that she could never join forces with him again".

In his book *The Visitors' Book: In Francis Bacon's Shadow: The Lives of Richard Chopping and Denis Wirth-Miller* (Hachette UK, 2016), Jon Lys Turner devotes a few pages to the friendship between Janetta and the pair of visual artists:

"Chopping and Wirth-Miller also became very close to Janetta Woolley, whom Partridge considered to be almost a daughter. Partridge had known her since she was a child, and had taken it on herself to look after her when her family were forced to flee their home in Spain when the Civil War broke out. Woolley had a series of short-lived marriages. Her fourth, to Derek Jackson, collapsed when Jackson eloped with her half-sister, Angela Culme Seymour. Woolley was at the time heavily pregnant with Jackson's only son.

The divorce that followed made Woolley a rich woman and she bought a house in Montpelier Square in Knightsbridge. Chopping had known Woolley since the 1940s, when they would both stay at Ham Spray House, and she became a friend of Francis Bacon.

Chopping had been looking to rent a flat in London for some time but was still short of funds to pay for a second home. Janetta provided a solution by allowing Chopping and

Wirth-Miller to use a flat below her Montpelier Square house for little money. Consequently, the couple had a Knightsbridge address.

The new London *pied-à-terre* was handy for both of them in terms of work. They could now court potential clients at leisure. Although Wivenhoe was still very much their home, the flat allowed for a more varied social life and, when necessary, gave them breathing space from each other.

Janetta noticed that when Chopping was staying alone downstairs, unfamiliar men would visit. This, she believed, was all perfectly normal and would have been fine had Chopping not boasted of his conquests to Wirth-Miller. Their relationship had been fairly open, but Chopping was sowing the seeds of further problems.

Wirth-Miller reacted in kind whenever he and Bacon hit the pubs and gambling dens of Soho together. The controversial Dutch writer Gerard van het Reve, a new friend who had lived with Minton at Shaftesbury Villas, wrote to Chopping expressing some concern about Wirth-Miller's nights on the town:

'I hope Denis is well and not hastening after that we are all far too old for. Tell him to get reconciled with old age, and to prepare for Death. And to kick all the pleasure boys with their tight trousers and sweating faces out of the house, and to lock himself up and paint — nothing else'.

Dicky Chopping spent more time with Arthur Jeffress when the latter was not in Venice. Jeffress's appetites were taking their toll, and his increasing weight caused him discomfort. He would catalog the problems 'Dame Time and Witch Gin' caused him but he ignored medical advice and was unwilling to change his lifestyle. He continued to overeat, chainsmoke cheroots and drink champagne and cocktails to excess.

Jeffress prefaced one letter from his palazzo with a caveat that it would be the 'dullest' he had ever written: it recounted a teatime visit by Jean Cocteau and his patron Francine Weissweiller, who had immediately made a bid to buy Jeffress's Venice home.

In 1956, Jeffress invited Chopping to travel to Venice with him in his chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce, stopping off en route at grand hotels.

Chopping returned from Venice full of energy and looked forward to telling Wirth-Miller the tales of what went on. Wirth-Miller was not so keen to hear them. In Chopping's absence he had spent six days drunk in London, having gone to the capital for a party thrown by Rodrigo Moynihan and attended by the old bohemian crowd. His behavior had been spurred on by his loneliness.

Janetta Woolley was of the opinion that the couple's relationship would benefit if Wirth-Miller also went on holiday. He was stewing about Chopping's promiscuousness, spending too much time with his inner demons, and then acting rashly to try and banish them. Woolley rented a farmhouse near Assier in the Dordogne, with plans to buy it. Shortly before she left for France, she asked Wirth-Miller if he would join her.

Wirth-Miller's mood improved on French soil. He wrote daily to both Chopping and Bacon. The cattiness and the curt tone of some of his other letters were absent. Among Janetta's friends in France, he was accepted for whom he was — a charming, interesting and quite successful landscape painter — rather than either Dicky Chopping or Francis Bacon's friend.

The other guests belonged to a different generation and a higher stratum of society. They included Phyllis Nichols, a pacifist friend of the Partridges, who was by this time 'a muddled old thing'; Colin Davies, a landscape painter; and Robert Kee, the respected TV journalist who was one of Woolley's ex-husbands and had attended Chopping's Hanover opening. At first, Wirth-Miller's closest companion was Woolley and Kee's young daughter, Georgie. They got on well and, years later, she would credit Wirth-Miller for her love of champagne.

Woolley was aware that Wirth-Miller initially felt out of place, and attempted to get in touch with Francis Bacon in the hope that he could join them. Wirth-Miller, however, was fast becoming accustomed to the company. The letters he sent to Chopping reflected a growing social confidence. 'I have to dash off to see Julian Pitt-Rivers almost at once,' he wrote concerning the aristocratic anthropologist, who had a house nearby. 'He really is very nice. One

could fall for him. He has that marvelous yet awful quality of making one seem the very special center of his attention.'

Woolley had bumped into Pitt-Rivers, his wife and the writer and heiress Nancy Cunard 'on a road miles from anywhere'. Her party had then been invited up to Pitt-Rivers's house at Le Roc, where they swam in the pool and took 'simple' lunches. Wirth-Miller wrote enthusiastically about truffled *oeufs anglais*, cherries soaked in brandy, local cider and 'delicious, ice-cold' Château de Panisseau.

Beyond the refinement of Pitt-Rivers's hospitality, Wirth-Miller enjoyed the local peasant cuisine too — including the fatty stew he would later cook for guests at the Storehouse. The party would pack wicker baskets of local food for afternoon picnics by the River Lot. Reflecting on the walk to the picnic spot, Wirth-Miller wrote: 'On the bank in one place near a ford masses of small blue butterflies were sipping the juice of the cow's shit and also some huge swallowtails.' As an artist, he was always able to capture the beauty and horror of nature in the same frame. The nights at Woolley's farmhouse were often warm enough for Wirth-Miller to sleep outside. He wrote to Chopping: 'This night is wonderful — deep navy blue — with a golden flush on the horizon and masses of glow worms. Janetta and Johnny [her new boyfriend] sleeping under the stars in the garden. I can hear giggles and springs creaking.'

He was full of remorse at the way he had treated Chopping, and wrote to him acknowledging it. Getting away from Britain had given him perspective, he wrote in one of his daily letters. He had been jealous and angry because he was lonely in Wivenhoe without him. He explained his own insecurities in reference to one of Chopping's trysts: 'I know I can never give to you what lies within Alex's power to provide — that alone is the sort of thought which makes me feel my inadequacy and therefore revert to childish behavior with you when a concrete situation occurs — and I am reminded of my inadequacy.' In the mornings he waited for the post to arrive, hoping for news from Wivenhoe.

The correspondence had little effect on Chopping's desire for adventure, and he admitted as much in his replies. In one, he said he had felt the urge to have sex with a man he had met,

pleading loneliness. Although Wirth-Miller found the letter upsetting, he remained realistic and conciliatory. If the act would help the relationship, he conceded, he should go ahead with it. ‘About Wilbert,’ he wrote, ‘you are silly to deprive yourself of an experience — i.e. a black man — that you have always wished for.’

He wrote to Chopping asking him to come to France and offering to pay for his plane ticket. He was rebuffed even though the latter said being home alone was ‘Miserable, miserable, miserable’: ‘there is no question whatever of me coming to France. I am afraid I shouldn’t like it anyway. It all sounds too unreal for me and I suspect from the way you write that you are all in a permanent haze of alcohol.’

The holiday gave Wirth-Miller the distance he needed to consider his feelings, although his thoughtfulness went unreciprocated. Their relationship was strong, but when it came to important matters they had at least temporarily lost the ability to offer each other solace”.

In February 1957 the Partridges traveled to Churriana, Spain, staying with Cyril Connolly's sister-in-law. On the 17th she recorded: “Dinner at the Cónsula, and our first meeting with Connolly since his arrival... When we moved to the sitting-room and gathered around the fire, Cyril retired to a far corner of the room, flung himself back in a chair with his face parallel to the ceiling and his eyes closed, and remained thus for the rest of the evening. (Janetta christened this his ‘music position’.) She said afterwards that his excuse for this ostentatiously rude behavior was that he was ‘desperately miserable’”.

Frances increasingly felt disconnected from the expatriate social scene around La Consula, with its parties, excessive drinking, and gossip swirling about everyone's love lives, particularly Janetta's. They were “a company of voyeurs flambéed in alcohol”. She even found herself disenchanted with Janetta, who often got caught up in the La Consula whirlwind, and she began to worry about Georgie and Rose; “having seen how desperately they long for her company I marvel at her blindness”.

There in Malaga, Janetta was introduced to a Spanish nobleman named Jaime Parladé y Sanjuanena, 3rd Marquis of Apezteguía. Frances was impressed: “a young, slender Spaniard,

with an oval face and long-lashed twinkling eyes". A month later, she wrote that she and Ralph had been "charmed... by his intelligence and gaiety". Parladé, for his part, would confess years later: "Janetta caught my attention because she was very special, very free, very open-minded, totally anti-religious, an atheist to the core...".

He had been working in the Dominican Republic for some years as the private translator for its bloodthirsty president, Rafael Trujillo, "that ghastly dictator". When he returned to Marbella in 1956, it was swinging: Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe-Langenburg, a German playboy, had built the Marbella Club, which became the destination for European and Hollywood royalty: guests included the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Grace Kelly, Cary Grant, Sophia Loren, Ava Gardner and Frank Sinatra. Parlade had encounters with many stars: Ted Kennedy was "an awful drunk and very unpleasant"; Sean Connery "a delightful man".

However, by March Janetta was back in England and it would not be until a year later that they would see each other again.

# Chapter 8.

On 27 February 1958 Frances wrote in her diary: "Janetta writes, 'I can't tell you how I am because I simply don't know. I've been desperate, uncertain and muddled'. And Robert, 'An utterly barren and impoverished state of mind. Have never felt so useless and empty'. How sad that  $0 + 0$  does not make 1". As we can see, Frances was not completely given up on the idea of seeing them together again.

A month later she said: "Janetta came down for a night in spite of the arctic weather and having just had the flu. When I asked for news of Robert her face broke up like water into which a stone had fallen. The cause of the 'unhappy muddle' of which she had written was that the question of their joining forces had again come to the fore. Though she obviously wanted to make the position clear to us she spoke in a sort of palimpsest through which I glimpsed a very sad position — for as one of them advanced the other retreated, and the only clear fact that emerges is that each is terrified of the pain the other can cause them, Also in practical terms that Janetta is going to France with the Godleys and X, while Robert remains 'desperate' in London".

And on 3 of June: "Janetta has been so much with X that I said to Ralph it may be a good thing if she married him, as he had a talent for friendship and entering into other people's lives. Ralph was indignant, saying I was being 'disloyal to Robert', and revealing that the last time she was here Janetta had said to him suddenly: 'I still love Robert'.".

When one evening Robert informed the Partridges that his girlfriend Cynthia was pregnant and that they were planning to get married, she found it almost unbearable to hear. "It was as if someone had died, and this I still feel. Janetta and Robert's past, present and potential relationship has always been something I highly valued and now it's dead, I think". Janetta reacted well to the news, while Connolly advised Robert to view the marriage as a three-year

contract. Following the wedding in April 1960, Frances expressed her emotions in her diary. She couldn't fathom how someone of "extraordinary distinction" as Janetta could be supplanted by another. It affected her deeply, to the extent that it felt as though she herself had been surpassed. Years later, however, he reflected: "When I think of the troubles of Robert and Janetta in the past, I do see that Ralph and I may have then done our level best to intervene in the interests of both. But what good did it do? And they were (both of them) the best loved and closest of our friends. The whole idea of intervention revolts me and I find it difficult to say why — 'clumsy', 'lacking in delicacy' are the phrases I think of. I simply can't imagine ever having wanted anyone to 'speak to Ralph' on my behalf. It is so essentially and vitally a matter between the two people concerned".

Be that as it may, in August 1958 Janetta and Johnny decided to separate. He remembered: "Throughout 1958 my life with Eliza became more and more agonizing for both of us. The sort of thing that would happen would be this. Life would be rolling along, week after week, stimulating and apparently happy. Eliza would take us to the opera again, and would have paid for my suit to be cleaned as well as my shirts, she would also have paid any expenses caused by our weekends, one, let us say, to the artists Dicky Chopping and Denis Worth-Miller at Wivenhoe, except I would have bought the three bottles of wine we took; we would also have just had six of her friends, and now to a rather shallow extent my friends, to supper. I might have struggled slightly here, but on the whole enjoyed it. Then the following day she would, very mildly, have asked me to fill the log basket or get some wine from the cellar. Suddenly, I would find myself exploding — how dare she order me about. I was already completely smothered by her money, her friends — all twenty or thirty years older than I was — by her house and her car (a Mercedes) and from having all my clothes constantly cleaned. Quite apart from being wounded, Eliza hated rows and confrontations.

One solution seemed to be for her to sell Montpelier Square and for us to set up a house together in the country. Weekend after weekend we drove round Wiltshire and Berkshire deep in this fantasy. Eventually we found a more or less perfect eighteenth-century house under the Downs, within reach, but not smothering reach, of the Partridges at Ham Spray and the

Campbells at Stokke. Eliza asked me if I liked it. I *did* like it, but couldn't say so. To say yes would mean being committed. Besides, I wanted to stay in London almost as much as I wanted to get out of it".

The affair came to an end and he married Sabrina Tennant in 1963. He remarried in 1985 to painter Nicolette "Nicky" Sinclair-Loutit. Janetta, for her part, continued with her customary way of life.

On June 30, 1958, Frances commented: "At the weekend a lively argument sprang up between Janetta and me. It began in the kitchen as I was cooking *truites aux amandes* (without really knowing how) and I criticized a very rich friend for selling his house merely to make a profit. Janetta said I was being monstrously unfair, and that it was just as reasonable for a millionaire to make money as for a poor man — something I couldn't accept. His profit may be vital to the poor man, but unless the rich man wants to do something splendid or very generous with his profit is futile. I admitted that I didn't like rich men on the whole, and thought them with some exceptions corrupted by power. 'You are being moral', said Janetta, and 'Yes, certainly, why not?' said I. At this stage we moved into the dinning-room and started eating our trout and continuing the discussion with Ralph and Johnny Gathorne-Hardy. Why shouldn't a rational being think about values? I wanted to know; Janetta said she hated the idea of them and could only think of them in terms of religion. People were unique and should never be generalized about or subjected to praise and blame, but merely 'apprehended'. Interesting, though not wholly tenable if one believes generalization to be the essence of intelligent thinking. 'Can we change the subject?' she said suddenly. Johnny: 'Oh no, I want to go on talking about it.' But we didn't.

In bed that night Ralph and I pondered the question: Why do the modern 'young' dread ethical concepts — good, bad or even true and beautiful? Ralph thought money had taken their place as something you can't do without, and the more the better. Their hopes of 'happiness' are low-pitched. Or perhaps in their eyes good, bad, etc. seem like outworn myths believed in by their parents but not by them, just as God or the supernatural did to us".

On 14 August 1958, Frances recorded in her diary:

"Yesterday Ralph and I drove over to lunch with Janetta and the three little girls, who have rented a house just over the downs at Combe for a few weeks. The children played happily on two swings under the old apple-tree growing in the middle of the rough sloping lawn, while we lay in the hot sun and blustery wind talking to Janetta. Asked about her plans for the future, she said she was dreaming of leaving England, and getting away somewhere warm.

Ralph talked afterwards about her restlessness with more criticism than I feel. He thinks her desire to get away frequently from family responsibility (though the most sensitive and kind mother when with her children) is something innate and compulsive, and will probably never leave her. But I remembered her lying on the lawn in her check cotton blouse and with her hair tied back from her serious delicately cut profile and was touched by the image. She is as she is — someone exceptional, unique. Why tried to alter her, even if it was possible? Certainly she is restless at present, but I see this as the product of her native independence coupled with unhappiness".

And four months later, on 14 December: "Talked too about Janetta, and how she hates being pinned down to *plans*, a trait that is inconvenient but also part of her charm. She clearly feels they are destructive to freedom, and would like to invent everything anew for herself, nor will she ever use a current phrase".

In early 1959, the Partridges returned to Spain, and once again stayed at the Brenan's in Buenavista (Salamanca). There they joined Janetta and her daughters, Georgie and Rose, and the family of Bill Davis, an exiled American who used to host Ernest Hemingway at his residence. Accompanied by her friends, Janetta again visited Parlade, who had moved to Marbella a year earlier. "There was much to enjoy — for instance a refreshing visit with Janetta and Georgie to Jaime Parlade in his father's house looking out over the sea to the frowning brow of Africa. Jaime was a charming host, and we got to know him better and delight in his company", Frances remarked.

And some days later: "Just before we left Spain we dined at the Cónsula, and Annie took me up to see Cyril, who was ill in bed. He motioned me to a chair with a royal gesture, lay with his large face on the pillow 'in music position' and began talking about Robert and Janetta. The last news he had heard was that they were to set up a house together, he said. I didn't want to be pumped and found the conversation painful. Perhaps the most acute thing he said was, 'At least Janetta has made a life for herself, even though it may be precarious and unsatisfactory, but Robert — apart from his work — has made no life at all'. Next day, February 21st, we left for Portugal".

"A splendid letter from Janetta in London, saying she has begun to hate the rat-race but both Robert and Robin tell her she mustn't, 'it's what life's about'. She's evidently seeing a lot of Robert, yet we are both now convinced of the hopelessness of our daydreams for them, and wonder why we clung to them so tenaciously. I see it is a matter of Geometry: the angle formed by Ralph and me on one side and Robert on the other = the angle formed by Ralph and me and Janetta. If two angles are both equal to the same angle they must be equal to each other".

As is to be expected from two characters like theirs, the two maintained this strange relationship, tense at times, and particularly friendly at others. Frances recounts in July 1959: "No sign of anyone at Montpelier. Then Janetta came out of her room, looking unhappy, with no voice, saying she had the flu. Burgo came up from the basement shiny with sweat, about to have a bath before going to a Hinchingbrooke party, which Johnny and Janetta were also invited to. Prettily dressed in pink shantung as she was, she decided not to go after all, and soon afterwards came Robert. Their manner to each other couldn't have been more friendly, with a distinct touch of flirtatiousness on both sides. 'Oh yes', she said later, 'he's been perfectly alright for some time'".

On March 30 she added: "Easter weekend wasn't altogether easy, I don't know why. Burgo was helpful and friendly, telling us of his project for a new book. Janetta was kind, sweet and sympathetic, dealing with the children in a stoical, rather noble way. Delightful Rose is a little Leibniz monad, reflecting the universe *in toto* with dewdrop clarity. Georgie is temporarily

fenced off and shut away. My normal manner of talking to her produced 'I don't know' and a violent shake of the head. Janetta then told me I was intimidating her, which I took greatly to heart. I think the situation between her parents has made her creep into her shell".

Then on July 24, she comments: "Life begins early at Montpelier, and swells to a crescendo with the voices of the children and the Italian *au pair* girl. Janetta lay in bed looking iller than before, with her hand on the white telephone. Georgie's swimming sports and Nicky's return to school loomed large. Nicky's huge trunk stood waiting to be packed, and Georgie's batting-cap had disappeared. When I returned from my session at the dentist, the confusion was wilder than ever. Yet in spite of the mess and the moment of near-collapse, the life of the house saves itself by the skin of its teeth, and perhaps gains in vitality by performing this feat. I made my way slowly up to my room on the top floor, past Janetta's bedroom, where she had retired to bed, and the nursery floor, where Robert was playing trains with Georgie and Nicky".

In recent years Ralph's health had deteriorated and his inner circle was genuinely concerned. The doctor had forbidden him to eat heavily, drink alcohol and smoke (which was one of his few pleasures, in his own words). Although he tried to comply with these instructions, he did not always succeed, and Frances vented her frustration in her diary.

The Partridges and their friends visited Spain with increasing frequency. In March 1960 Frances wrote:

"A telegram came from Janetta that she would join us at Almería. We were delighted, but almost scared at the thought of company, for we have been a long time along, even if all our friends and Burgo have been splendid correspondents.

The drive to Almería went well, Ralph saying he felt very strong, and what joy to find Janetta there, already having moved her furniture to humanize her room. As I guess she would, she had an invigorating effect on Ralph, and I know he felt her support. So in a different way were the Brenans who arrived a week later, Gerald with flu, so he said. When I Was Alone pressing my flowers in my bedroom he came to see me. In the very nicest, most friendly way he asked me in detail about Ralph's health, listened attentively, and said that if at any moment

we were in difficulties or needed a doctor a telegram would bring him to wherever we were. I was moved and grateful for his understanding. Gerald really isn't feeling well himself, and his friendliness in coming is a thing I shan't forget — Janetta too has been angelic.

Janetta left with the Brenans to stay with them and with Jaime, but came back to us again for a hotter spell of excursions and flower-hunting. Before we started on our journey home she told us she now loves the idea of leading her own life — independent except for the children".

In early June the Partridges took a short holiday in Ireland, accompanied by Janetta, whose purpose was to collect botanical records for the forthcoming *Atlas of the British Flora*:

"Luckily for me both my companions Entered into my search with apparent enthusiasm. I read not a single book except Irish Floras and Guides, yet the time was crammed to bursting with rich sensations, mossy smells, constantly varying light, and the freshness of a satisfying draught of spring water faintly tinged it with earth and growing plants. We have made no plans, but never wrangled about 'where to go'. At Kilkee we found an Irish San Sebastian, with the beaming faces of small Victorian houses ranged round its concha. One huge purple face old lady sat in the glassed-in verandah of our hotel, silently watching the world go by. There was very strong Irish whiskey, homemade brown bread, a pole of butter, peat fires and hot bottles in our beds. Turning North the next day we reached the famous and immensely tall cliffs of Moher. Janetta, suddenly panic-stricken, took one look and exclaimed, 'They're beastly. I hate them'. However, her V. C. blood forced her to lie down on her stomach and look over at the sheerest point. At Ennistymon 'we first reached the limestone, and shrieked in unison as we came along a great patch of the purple flowers of Bloody Cranesbill, and everywhere saxifrages and orchids. Best of all were the fantastic ash-coloured rocks of the region called the Burren, in whose crevices a mass of rare plants were growing'.

We have booked rooms at Leenane for the Whitsun weekend and from here we took a day on Achill... Their Moorish purple-pink was the dominant colour except for fuchsia red. Janetta felt a tug to the West, although it is inhabited by her ghosts, and bravely booked herself on a boat to the Aran Islands".

Back in Ham Spray, Janetta and the Partridges shared a weekend with Professor Dick Sanders of Duke University (Durham, North Carolina), "who is writing about Lytton and all the Stracheys". "I wasn't sure how they would get on, but she soon saw the intensely human, emotional being that lies underneath the donnish exterior and American pursuit of culture... We had the Kees and the Godleys to drink on the lawn. It was quite clear which were the professor's favourites. He took a huge fancy to Robert, and said to Ralph about Janetta, 'She's very attractive. Doesn't Frances ever worry about you falling for her?'".

At the end of November Frances went up to the library to find Ralph lying on the floor. The next few days were ones of anguish and despair; the family doctor, Geoff Konstam, assumed it must have been another heart attack (he had suffered one a few years earlier), and recommended complete rest. In the early hours of the 30th Frances awoke to hear her husband struggling for breath for four hours. A strange calm came over her, and she prepared to wait for the inevitable. The next morning Ralph felt better, had an appetite and did some reading. Frances made a note in her diary: "I went downstairs while he was eating, and listened to Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* on the wireless without much pleasure. I left Ralph a walking-stick to bang on the floor if he wanted me — but I never expected to hear, nor shall I ever forget that dreadful 'thump, thump, thump'...". On 1 December he simply wrote: "Now I am *absolutely alone and forever*". Some days later she remarked: "My instant awareness of loss was total, final and complete. He was gone, and nothing that remained had any significance for me".

"It would be ungrateful, though, not to mention the fabulous kindness of friends... the Carringtons, the Gowings, Burgo, Robert... And oh, *Janetta!* — what a debt I now have to her; flying back from Greece, taking me in and making a real refuge for me at Montpelier Square with all her rare and exquisite sensitiveness, gentleness and strength", Frances recalled.

Janetta suggested selling Ham Spray and Montpelier Square and finding a country house to share, but Frances realized Janetta would need a man to live with, not an elderly friend. Anne Chisholm comments: "The friend she counted on most of all was Janetta, but she worried about needing her too much. She toiled away at replying to condolence letters quite calmly,

but Janetta was different. ‘When I even begin to think of all you’ve done and been to me these last days I simply burst into tears,’ she wrote, ‘which are things I try to stave off as much as possible... there’s no one in the whole world I love more than you and want to see... I dread to think what an exhausting, draining weight I must have been to you, who have so many others.’ On the whole, she was getting on better than she thought she would, although ‘I’ve felt worried that I was trying to bear the unbearable and would wake up and find I just couldn’t, and go off my head.’ She longed to hear from Janetta: ‘You mustn’t mind if I write to you often and please write to me’”.

Early in December, Janetta took Frances to stay at Chatsworth with her new flame, Andrew Robert Baxton Cavendish, 11th Duke of Devonshire, “who longed to chuck everything for her”, Leigh Fermor recalled. He also had bought many pictures from Lucian Freud. Meanwhile, according to the painter, he had an affair with the duke’s wife, Deborah Mitford. As we said, Freud had slept with Janetta on his return from the war, while she was married to Slater. Forty years later, Lucian also bedded Janetta’s daughter, Rose Jackson, who played the role of muse and model for his paintings *Naked Portrait with Reflection* (1980) and *Naked portrait II* (1980-81). According to Janetta, however, when Rose saw the painting she suffered some form of ocular nervous breakdown. The whole episode, Janetta thought, could have been retaliatory. Anne Dunn quoted her as saying, “Lucian kicked me in the bottom at the Gargoyle and Derek knocked Lucian out. Was it revenge thirty years later?”.

Janetta spent Easter at Ham Spray, where Frances had returned to live after Ralph’s death, although she was considering selling it. “Nicko came to dinner last night. We talked of religion, and an argument developed from my saying that we who believed in good and beauty are ultimately accepting something on faith alone, just as the religious do. Nicko wanted to deny this but didn’t have his reasons ready though seemingly enjoying the argument. Janetta brought up, more reasonably, the fact that there were numerically more acts of faith in religion. With a pink patch on her cheek, she said she could never possibly marry someone who was a believer, and hinted that it was morally wrong to do so. Also that she didn’t believe in

marriage. I didn't enquire whether she meant the religious ceremony or lifelong companionship".

A few days later, on 11 April 1961, the sale of the property became effective: "After nine the telephone rang. It was the agent who had sent all the viewers: 'I've got good news for you. I've sold your house, and at the full price'. Murmuring approval, I felt my heart drop like a stone, and from then on the agony swelled and swelled, and Burgo was even more upset than I, and retired to the music-room to play *When I am laid in earth* on the gramophone. I went up to bed feeling I was a murderer and I had killed Ham Spray with my own hands".

In the summer of 1961, in the company of Frances and her ex-husband Derek Jackson, Janetta rented a chalet next door to Koestler's house and spent three weeks in the mountains.

In early July, staying at Stokke, Burgo and Janetta accompanied Frances on the closing days of Ham Spray. Janetta had rented a chalet in Alpbach, Austria, neighbor to Arthur Koestler's summer house. She invited Frances for the summer, and her friend accepted. By 24 July she wrote in her diary: "Ham Spray is a closed book". She left no record of her departure. A month later, while in London looking for a flat, she sent a long account of it all to the Brenans. The last weeks, she confessed, had been "absolute hell". Barbara Bagenal, a friend of Dora Carrington and a painter herself, had once more managed to anger Frances by writing to Noel Carrington complaining of feeling excluded because she hadn't received one of her close friend's paintings. She also lamented the destruction of "Carrington's memorial to Lytton". "It is very odd", Frances concluded, "when one has spent thirty years of one's life in a house, and the best and happiest too, to be told it is anyone's memorial to anyone else. But this is all finished now and the relief of having it behind me is immense".

Unsurprisingly, Austria had yielded mixed results. The entourage consisted of Janetta, Frances and Derek Jackson, with whom she was now on good terms again (as well as being his main breadwinner). Frances lodged in a small hotel near the chalet, but she found herself disliking the quaint wooden buildings, what she referred to as the "cuckoo clock" culture, and the "hideous" alpine landscape. Having Koestler nearby didn't help much. However, she did

find the overall atmosphere good for recuperation, akin to a nursing home environment, which enabled her to complete a translation she was working on. She helped to look after Rose, then aged six, and found real pleasure in the company of two of Janetta's younger friends: Julian Jebb ("queer though he obviously is") and Georgia Tennant. "What a splendid girl! Intelligent, warmhearted, brilliantly funny and fine to look at". Both Georgia and Julian were strongly influenced by Janetta, something Frances didn't find surprising. "They are coming out of a period of almost agonizing obsession with her and her values, and it was fascinating for me to open a window and peer back through time into that lost world of desperate fixation, swinging wildly on the swell of favour or disapproval. Having always thought of her as remarkable and adorable, this is nonetheless a new projection of her shadow as dominant, and holding the key to everything in her hands". The Campbells visited, as well as Derek, who had intense discussions with Koestler "about mathematical problems". Frances viewed the mountains — much like everything else in her life at that time — as a personal challenge. "Janetta mainly hates, fears and dreads them". However on her final day she embarked on a solitary climb of six thousand feet, "mainly to prove that I could and because I thought I never should again". She didn't tell anyone about a nightmare involving Ralph's death. In the dream, he died again (he hadn't really been dead all this time) and she found herself standing in her half-empty bedroom at Ham Spray, "feeling a creeping paralysis of loneliness and cold".

Meanwhile in Berlin, on the night of 12-13 August 1961, without warning, the infamous Berlin Wall was erected. Only a small part remained unbuilt, heavily guarded by the Soviet police. Frances comments: "The Russians had cut off the Western sector completely, enraged by the increasing flow of refugees from the East. Crisis, the rattling of sabres, big talk on Janetta's car wireless — 'not only words' was going to be the answer of the West. Janetta and I inclined to be despairing — but a wave of common-sense calm from Robin and Julian (at least able to read the language) restored our equilibrium, probably unjustifiably".

On 28 August, back in London, Frances comments: "Janetta: it was lovely to see her, something about her well-known personality always has the power to surprise. She was on the verge of tears because thieves had been to Montpelier and taken away the little diamond

heart which used to swing so prettily at her wrist — and other things. Last night she came to dinner with me and Craig, very brown in her brown silk frock”.

And on October 3 she wrote: “Janetta had friends yesterday evening... Next it was whether we were being fogies or not in failing to appreciate modern painting and drama. Was this a period of decline? Raymond and Paddy thought so — Patrick Kinross said every fogy had said these of every period of civilization. I said it worried me to miss so much possible pleasure and to think we might be like the people who cackle with laughter at the Impressionists. Janetta said in her gentlest voice that it didn't worry her at all — there were so many other things she greatly enjoyed”.

A year after Ralph's death, Frances was looking for a way to make ends meet without being a hindrance to her friends and relationships. On 16 November she confessed: “Talking just now to Janetta on the telephone I was so aware of the dire acuteness of my crisis that I felt surprised it didn't communicate itself to her. But after almost a year of bereavement, in which everyone has been infinitely kind and I have probably seemed to be well on the way to recovery, how can anyone possibly realize that it's worse now than ever, or if they do, how can they fail to be bored by the fact? Better, a little, today. The sun shines. I realized why this access of despair has come: all these last year I have been preparing to leave my new life, by demolishing the old. Now I've got to begin doing it and it's a ghastly mockery and I hate it”.

The Nichols invited her to Lawford for the last weekend in November. Their neighbor Randolph Churchill joined them for dinner, and Frances noted that he became tediously drunk. However, despite this, Frances found exactly what she needed: “relaxation with company”. She spent the evening of the 30th at the cinema with Isobel Strachey, and the next day Janetta came to the rescue. They traveled to Chatsworth to stay with one of her many admirers, the Duke of Devonshire, accompanied by Patrick Kinross and the painter Adrian Daintrey. The splendor and magnificence of the house and its treasures were nearly overwhelming. Frances and Adrian spent hours examining Rembrandt drawings as snow gently blanketed the terraces and fountains in the park.

Burgo and his wife Henrietta Garnett ("Bunny" and Angelica's daughter) had settled in London, and on 9 August 1963 Sophie Vanessa was born. A month later, on 7 September, while talking on the telephone to his friend the journalist Peter Jenkins, Burgo dropped dead. Like his father, he suffered from a heart condition that had gone unnoticed. And even if it had been detected earlier, specialists said, there was nothing that could have been done. Devastated by this new tragedy, Frances traveled to Apulia in the company of Raymond Mortimer.

When they arrived in Rome and discovered Janetta there, an emotional crisis erupted. Frances hadn't heard a word from her since Burgo's death. Knowing that the Hills had joined the group in the meantime, Frances couldn't understand Janetta's silence. In fact, the couple couldn't bring themselves to tell Janetta what had happened, so she learned about it the moment she arrived in Rome, shortly before Frances. Appalled, she wrote a note to Frances from her hotel, explaining why she hadn't been in touch. Frances destroyed almost all evidence of Burgo's death from her papers, so whatever Janetta said remains unknown, but evidently, it wasn't enough. Some fragments of diary entries from those days survived. Frances couldn't comprehend why the Hills had kept silent; she suspected that Janetta must have chosen to stay with Jaime, as she had done when Ralph died. Frances felt deeply wounded. "Venus toute entière, has forgotten for the moment her children and friends", she wrote. During dinner that night in the Piazza Navona, Janetta attempted to persuade her otherwise, but Frances remained steadfast in her stance. "My heart turned cold as a stone," she wrote afterwards, "and I couldn't look at Janetta. I know I'm being unfair to her, but her letter was false, false". The following day, Frances and Raymond departed from Rome by train, bound for Bari.

In September, back in London, she saw Janetta and realized she had misjudged her, and everything returned to normal. Janetta never forgot how painful and bewildering she found the misunderstanding, but she acknowledged that Frances had been deeply affected by shock and pain. Frances too, felt terrible. "Guilt about my awful insane mistrust of Janetta in Rome. Indignation with the Hills for causing it by what was evidently sheer cowardice. Wondering really how much I can count on my own sanity if I could be so awful to Janetta. Can she ever

forgive me?". But she could, and she did. In October she wrote: "Lovely evening with Janetta. I am utterly ashamed of Roman insanity". She also wrote to the Hills, protesting about "the Corfu conspiracy of silence" which had caused her "huge pain"; it was Heywood who took the fall, and eventually they were forgiven.

Two months later she wrote: "Janetta and I went to the Shostakovich opera last night. I enjoyed it and also the great sweetness and kindness of her company. Henrietta and her lodger Vivien were giving a party afterwards and had invited me to come. I couldn't make up my mind but felt a gentle pressure from Janetta not to go. We looked in afterwards at a little club she belongs to in Leicester Square and were joined by Julian who had been at the Cadogan Square party and described it in glowing terms — the beauty and youth of the guests, the touching welcoming faces of the hostesses, the lively dancing. But as I drove away from Leicester Square I was in tears of sorrow that Burgo wasn't there, and thinking agonizingly of that other glorious party so short a while ago to celebrate their wedding".

And in January:

"Janetta came to lunch and told me that she had been reading *The Waste Land* obsessively and with an almost total incomprehension that had reduced her to tears. I spent yesterday morning doing the same and I can understand her attitude..."

Rain fall out of the sky in pailfuls after Janetta and I pleasantly eaten our boiled eggs and grapefruit together, when Cyril arrived to pick up some shirts she had bought him from the sales. He was genial, even benign, brought out a bag of lychees and sat eating them, leaning back with a napkin spread over his broad front, peeling them voluptuously with stubby fingers. Janetta has said: 'Don't ask Cyril about *The Waste Land*.' 'I think I will,' I said, and did. Whas more, it was a good thing because he loves instructing and did it extremely well.

Janetta is off to Spain, Magouche with her. She won't tell me when, yet I have asked her several times. Does she know with her acute sensitivity how dreadfully I miss her?"

At that time Janetta had a strong friendship with Julian Jebb, the journalist and television producer she had met in Austria some years earlier. In October 1965 Frances registered: "Janetta's and Julian's relationship develops and strengthens with time. I can't fit it into any known category; the nearest perhaps being devoted brother and sister. Julian told Magouche his feelings for Janetta was as near being 'in love' as he'd known with a woman. He depends on her as well as appreciating and loving her, and desperately wants the other people he likes, like Desmond, to appreciate her too. What exactly Julian represents to Janetta I don't know. She takes him with her everywhere — he is even going out on her week's dash to Marbella. They must meet or telephone at least once a day".

A few days later she mentions it again: "Janetta has just been here briefly and has left me asking myself various questions. No one in the world supports her friends with a stronger and more sensitive hand and she will think imaginatively of tiny details (worrying for instance whether I was getting on all right with Sophie yesterday). Yet when Sonia [Orwell] arrived very drunk to see her last night (with Francis Bacon also drunk and his friend George sober and helpful) Janetta felt she couldn't do anything to stop her or show this approval, and went on plying her with drinks until at last Sonia rose to go and fell flat on the floor. After she and Julian left me the other evening (after Trovatore) they went to a gambling club and spent all night there. I asked about Julian going to Spain with her and she 'wondered why' or 'how' perhaps he was going. She's very fond of him and has boundless influence over him, here adores her, she doesn't hesitate to say her mind to him and yet — I think this perhaps is the crux of it — she won't say anything with *moral* implications.

How far should responsibility for friends go? It is as important not to use your influence to draw them into habitual extravagances they can't afford (though you may be able to) or conversely to speak up for your scale of values however priggish it may seem, as it is to come to the rescue when disaster has struck".

The entry for 9 January 1966 announces: "Janetta has had a letter from her doctor saying she must come home and have a hysterectomy — she will be arriving next weekend. Julian is back from Spain and told me two days ago. I want to be at hand when this happens". She

reflects that "Janetta was the person I was fondest of in the world and who had done most for me and utterly propped me in my times of trouble". On 1 February, after the operation, Frances visited her in hospital. "I found her lying in a blue dressing gown talking to Johnny, looking pretty and marvelously herself, her room banked with flowers which contrived to look hideous as hospital flowers do".

Seven months later, in September, Janetta and Jaime welcomed the Brenans and Frances to a rented house in Marbella. Frances recalled: "Soon after six o'clock Janetta arrived having just seen someone off at the airport. Gerald has told me she was looking marvellously well and young, but the golden brown of her sunburnt skin doesn't conceal the fact that she is too thin and strained, and when I asked her how she was she said, 'Desperate'... There's something frighteningly dreamlike about being surrounded by what Julia calls the playboy life. I don't mean Janetta and Jaime of course. Jaime goes off with his briefcase to work on his new hotel La Fonda, and I've not seen Janetta son domestic in years. They both seem happy. Yet the surrounding waters that wash around them are full of lost souls — people who under a smiling guise live under the sway of the death instinct — who kill time, let their minds rot, chatter, have another drink and wait for something to happen".

A few days later the archetypal playboy arrived in Marbella: Mark Culme-Seymour, Janetta's half-brother, "asking if he could have one quick drink to give him courage before going off to the Windsors to lunch".

Like his sister Angela, Mark was noted for his beauty, wit and promiscuity. He first married Babette Patric-Jones on 26 June 1935, and divorced her three years later. He was wounded during the war and gained the rank of Major in the service of the Rifle Brigade.

He re-married Princess Hélène Marie de la Trémoïlle, daughter of Louis Charles Marie de la Trémoïlle, 11th Duc de la Trémoïlle, on 5 April 1941 (divorced in 1949). He married, thirdly, Patricia June Reid-Graham, on 6 October 1956 (divorced in 1966). He finally married, for the last time, Mary Darrall Riely, on 1 January 1973, "a neat ex-pretty American with whom nothing is wrong but a 'little-me' voice", as Frances puts it.

He had three children from his marriage to Reid-Graham: Miranda, Sarah Louise and Michael Patrick, and died in July 1990 in Chelsea, London.

The American writer Elaine Dundy, who had just published *The Dud Avocado*, recalled in her autobiography (*Life Itself! An Autobiography*, Hachette UK, 2012) an encounter with Mark in 1958 that paints him in a very personal light:

"In January, soon after my book came out, I met Mark Culme-Seymour at a party. I quickly noted that he was attractive, in fact ravishing. Instinctively I knew he was single and invited him to come to the party we were giving to celebrate my novel. It never hurt to have an attractive extra man around."

Later that week Mark invited us to dinner at the Caprice. Once there he asked us if he could bring to our party his sister, just divorced and feeling a bit lost. At some point Ken [Kenneth Tynan, her husband] went to the men's room and wasn't halfway there when out of the blue, lazy-eyed and laid-back with only the merest inclination of his head, Mark said, 'I asked you both to dinner because I particularly want to go to bed with you most awfully'. It was a pounce without a preface. I couldn't decide whether to be offended, or — what? If your manly beauty is as highly charged as Mark's and you're sending out all kinds of sexy signals, the pounce is not ineffective. Still, I was annoyed at the crudeness and decided to put him down; he deserved it. Well, maybe not exactly put him down. Rather put him off. 'I don't know. I'll give you my answer at the party,' I said, still startled by our conversation, just as Ken came back.

At our party I wore a very twenties short white dress I bought at the inexpensive dress shop Fenwicks. It cost whatever would be the equivalent then of \$19.95 today. Another one of the dresses I remember with pleasure, it was completely made up of rows and rows of tasseled fringes that moved when I moved (and I moved a lot). There was dancing. Ken had hired the band of street musicians we used to hear playing New Orleans jazz outside the Yorkminster pub in Soho, and they were a great success. Every American we knew in London was there, as well as the new English literati of the left that Ken's new conscience had attracted and theatre and film people. Gore Vidal came with Lillian Hellman. Donald Ogden Stewart, one of the

better known Hollywood exiles from the McCarthy political climate and screenwriter of our favorite film *The Philadelphia Story*, was, with his wife Ella Winters, the first to arrive. New friends Alan Sillitoe and Ruth Fainlight were there, as were usual suspects such as J. P. 'Mike' Donleavy, Christopher Logue, Doris Lessing, Clancy Sigal and Tony Crosland, Labour MP. So was Tracy, as always, meeting everyone in her new quilted bathrobe and having a lovely time.

Then Mark arrived and I wanted to be wicked. I went with him into the bedroom, where the coats were left. Tense but determined to speak before I changed my mind, I said, 'Yes.' We fixed the date and the time.

Two days later I turned up at his flat. He looked at me as I settled into a chair with the drink he'd offered me and said, 'I see you're no longer nervous.' I wasn't. In fact, I was very much at ease. The Boucher Girl was in the ascent.

Thus began a perfectly normal, perfectly conventional yet exciting ex-marital affair. I was able to blend it into my life. I was feeling my oats, feeling I'd earned the right to do anything I felt like. I was changing from a pre-Dud reflector to a post-Dud generator.

Mark belonged to neither the literary nor the theatrical category, but he was a recognizable English type. In fact he too, like Cyril [Connolly], was a British institution. In Mark's case he was a splendid example of the man-about town. Women were his real career and he was very good at it, but nothing prepared me for how deeply he needed women as when we went to bed; at orgasm his face was wet with tears".

About this time Jaime was exclusively dedicated to the organization and opening of his hotel, La Fonda, in Marbella. Meanwhile, Derek Jackson bought a plot of land for Janetta in the Andalusian foothills behind the coast ("her land is a rich and fertile triangle of orange trees, olives, persimmons, grapes, bananas, in a deep basin of mountains whose edges cut cleanly against the pale evening sky", Frances recalls), where she and Jaime built a house, Tramores, around the ruins of a Moorish castle. With his flair for design and decoration it was, in Frances own words, "a masterpiece... as if I had been confronted with a work of art". "Below the house, down to the huge swimming pool of very warm water, everything that has been planted has

sprung up and flourished. There are huge thorn-apple bushes, dangling their great cream-coloured flowers, morning glories, marvel of Peru, stocks, zinnias and a thousand other plants, while below the pool came fields of sweetcorn, laden fig trees, greengage and walnut trees. This, then, is my first impression of Tramores — total subjection and admiration — not a single word of criticism", Frances admitted.

On 3 October she made the following remark about Jaime: "He certainly wasn't easy to talk to, though his English was perfect with a slight north country accent, for I felt he wasn't really interested in anything but money — what an astonishingly all-absorbing topic that can be! We talked through somehow or other, and then I suddenly felt my blood simmering at the obsequiousness with which one of his servants was handing him cigars, cutters and lighters on a tray, and the fact that he took them with a gesture implying that the man did not belong to the same order of human being as he did at all. I spoke of it to Nicko and Mary afterwards and they said, 'Oh, all rich Spaniards are like that. They're hundreds of years behind the times. They never thank servants for anything, like we do. Jaime and Pirou are exceptionally enlightened'".

However, Janetta could also show the same disdainful attitude: "Jaime suggested that Miguel [one of the servants] and his children should be urged to bathe in the pool. Janetta said quickly: 'Oh, no. I should simply hate to come and find them here'. And I remembered how shocked long ago Ralph and I were because Lady Hambledon refused access to her pool to the lower orders".

In February 1973 Frances mentioned in this regard: "Janetta says she can't help feeling shocked at the amount Anne talks about money. It is in the Gathorne-Hardy genes; she has less of it than most of them".

Janetta had barely returned to London when Frances wrote in early November: "She was looking tired, and when after lunch Julian and Andrew Murray-Thripland arrived flush with wine and talk, her face suddenly became pink and crumpled and she retired to sleep on her bed. Nothing is more exhausting than being endlessly at the mercy of people squatting like toads, drinking and talking. I felt she had a lot on her mind, and she told me briefly that she

'had wanted to get back to Spain by the end of the month, but was wondering whether she could leave them all'... What is to be done about the erosion and dissipation of Janetta's vital spark by so many people, of whom I'm one?".

What was Janetta herself doing to shake off the despair that seemed to follow her like a black cloud? Not much, really. On the 10th Frances comments: "Mary came to see me after gruelling visits to her divorce lawyer and her accountant. She went off to see Janetta, worn out and determined not to go with her to a champagne-drinking private view but collapse early to bed. Julian tells me that Janetta exerted her powers of persuasion and succeeded in taking Mary with her to the party, 'for her own good'".

December 1st:

"Dinner last night for Iris Murdoch, the Kees, Janetta and Julian. It went off very well; everyone liked Iris — how could they help it? Her magnificent realism, her Joan-of-Arc-like quality, her way of attending to what everyone said, weighing it (to the accompaniment of a very Oxford 'Yes, yes, yes') and then bringing out her response, her evident enjoyment and sense of fun. She arrived in a splendid antique military coat made of the finest black face cloth with gilt buttons; she tucked in and drank plentifully (how she must suffer at the Cecils'!), she talked. Everyone was at their best, particularly Janetta, who gave a wonderful description of sobbing real tears over a book in Harrods' book department, and was also very amusing about how she viewed the universe in terms of 'me, them and IT'. Apart from the constant tugging at one's watchfulness involved in hospitality I enjoyed the evening very much. Talk was general, right round the dinner table, and also individual; they stayed till nearly one o'clock.

As Janetta was leaving she said that she was tempted to postpone her flight to Spain next Tuesday, and stay and go out with Rose ten days later. 'Oh, do', I said. 'It would be so nice for all of us.' 'Well, I think I might. Of course Rose is quite all right. She doesn't worry. But I do.' And then, suddenly veering like a sailing ship tacking she said, 'The only thing is I do want to

help him', (Jaime, though she didn't say so) 'with the preparations for opening his hotel [La Fonda]. It would be real work, and I'd like to do it, and I think he wants me to'.<sup>6</sup>

Lord, Lord, Lord, how the rain comes thundering down. I've taken a bit of Charlemagne between my teeth and on I go. Now that I've made the decision I don't mind so much. Not at all, in fact. Rather enjoying it.

A story of Janetta's about returning from Paris in a crowded uncomfortable train with Diana Cooper, after all flights had been stopped for fog. Janetta fell asleep and then woke to see Diana's blue eyes staring fixedly at her. She gave a slight smile. No response, and she realized the face had been so often lifted that her eyelids wouldn't close over her eyes, and she was asleep".

A week later she recorded: "Dinner alone with Janetta last night. Why has it left me a little sad? When we sat down to a most delicious meal of watercress soup and roast pheasant she commented that I was sitting on the very edge of my chair and that it was characteristic of me. F: 'I suppose I feel I must be ready to dash off at a moment's notice.' J: 'Yes, and I think it's that lack of calm that produces your physical troubles.' F: 'I'm sure it does — except that I'm not quite sure which is cause and which effect. Do you find it hard to be calm?' J: 'No, not in the very least, but then I've got the opposite physical temperament'".

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<sup>6</sup> Janetta's aesthetic criteria soon became a major influence on the young decorator. Jaime recalled: "I used to ask her in a subtle way about my doubts about decoration, just like that. 'What would you think if...'. And she would answer in a nonchalant tone: 'Humm, I wouldn't do that...' And of course, I listened to her".

# Chapter 9.

Frances wrote on February 3rd, 1967: "Today Janetta takes off for Spain; I saw her briefly yesterday. I am just as influenced by her powers of persuasion as anyone else is, and of course feel just as much personal sadness at the loss of her incomparable company. As I left she backed me to ring up Georgie and I will. I took my Othello records for her to play (after her response to Rigoletto) and Janetta was anxious I should know that she often heard Georgie playing them. I said they were probably warned with use and she told me she had dreamed of them, and that when she looked at them 'they were pitted and scratched and grooved like the outside of the moon. Then I put them on and the most marvelous music came out'. How should this dream be interpreted?"

She then refers to a visit from Nicky Loutit, now married to the cinematographer Serge Brodskis: "At Janetta's I saw Nicky and we talked briefly about the 'drug-takers'. They have turned 'very unfriendly and scathing' towards the 'drink-takers' (such as herself and Johnny, who were genial and friendly in their cups) at Henrietta's recent party. Who were the chief druggists, I asked? 'The Ormsby-Gores, and one of the Rolling Stones'. Nicky agreed that their motive force or axle-pin was boredom and that there was something hopelessly negative about it".

Meanwhile, Janetta repeated a typical pattern of her own, regarding the care and attention of her younger daughters: "Yesterday came a touching line from Janetta making it clear that it is her relationship with Jaime (rather than the new house) that binds her to Spain and keeps her away from her children. She 'worries and thinks and loves from afar, in a disquieting way revealing itself in anxious nightmares'. One must dwell on the plus, which is her happy relation with Jaime", Frances reflected.

On 16 May 1967 Frances received a phone call from Rosemary Peto. There had been a tragic accident: Serge Brodskis and Katherine Fedden were on their way to Morocco when the car they were travelling in crashed near Vittoria. "Serge was very seriously, possibly fatally injured, and Katherine herself terribly bruised and shocked. Nicky and Renée Fedden [Katherine's mother] have flown out there, Janetta has been wired and is coming to meet them. Robert has proved as usual a stalwart support in time of need. God help us, what a world!".

On the 18th she wrote some more details: "The car was being driven by the third member of the party, a young art student without a driving license. It is therefore a police matter and is likely to remain so until Serge recovers or dies. He's still unconscious and there seems no certainty which will happen. Janetta is staying with Nicky at a Vittoria hotel, and there are great complications about money. The accident took place at 6 a. m. and both Serge and Katherine were asleep; perhaps the driver was also".

On 1 June Frances received a letter from Janetta in which she said: "It was appalling. I still feel in a state of total shock from it all and obsessed by the horror of it. It was the most brutal destructive thing in the world to be near someone so hurt, in such agony. Beside the appalling anxiety, it was all fearfully difficult, a non-stop series of things to be done. And then Serge's amazing Mum... This camp of anxious women developed in the only hotel in Vittoria, with whisky and scrambled eggs in the bedrooms. I kept trying to make people sleep, I certainly used to cry in the street with exhaustion. I was terribly worried about Nicky and fearfully moved by her. She became very quiet, childlike and utterly dependent".

Serge would eventually recover from the accident and married Nicky in Gibraltar, on 19 February 1968.

On 10 June Frances mentions that Janetta was planning to leave the Montpelier Square flat, find one for Georgie and take Rose to Tramores with her, "where a tutor will be found for her for the next two terms". "Altogether she has the reins of her life pretty firmly in hand", she remarks. At the end of the month Montpelier Square was empty and Georgie would go to live with Nicky. Her last material link to London was gone. "The imminence of Janetta's departure

for heaven knows how long casts a cloud as black as the huge one that is about to open its mouth and swallow the sun", Frances laments.

On the 29th the family left England. "Janetta's departure, with her three nymphs, all looking particularly nymphlike, attractive, graceful and in a state of excitement about taking wing — Rose to Greece, Nicky to Paris, Georgie with Janetta to Spain".

Once in Malaga, Janetta joined the staff of La Fonda as a chef. "Janetta looks smooth and happy", Frances remarked when visiting her. "When she gets up to Tramores she is a bewitched princess, and moves slowly round looking lovely at each fruit tree or datura, considering the placing of a tile or the color of a door. Her tempo becomes slower, and she must need this relaxation after several hours working in the fonda kitchen each night".

Some of the guests at La Fonda Hotel included Brigitte Bardot, Kim Novak, Lauren Bacall, Sean Connery, Omar Sharif and many royals such as the Duke of Windsor, the king and queen of Belgium, Juan, Count of Barcelona, father of Juan Carlos and grandfather of King Philip VI of Spain.

On 21 December, after visiting the Brenans (she was dying of breast cancer), Janetta wrote to Frances saying she had found Gamel "better and worse" than expected — she was lucid and calm, but terribly swollen, even her face crooked and distorted. "Gerald is nearly off his head. He's frenzied. He never stops gabbling, talking, quivering, exhausted, ferocious, on and on and on, contradicting himself, never calm, awful things being said amongst practical ones... Uninterruptible, totally unreasonable... Then he and Honor [Tracy] really *loathe* each other. I do truly feel they might either of them murder the other. Gamel must sit with her lop-sided calm while this savage war hurdles along the icy corridor and through half-closed doors... Honor's affection for Gamel was very touching, and at least she *has* some and I really don't think Gerald has any now". She goes on to describe "the arrival of Xavier and Miranda trying to persuade Gerald to get a nurse and accept money (all your things in fact). Gerald raved".

In March 1968 Frances visited Tramores again. She and Janetta went to Benahavís, where Jaime was waiting for them, to continue on to Marbella. "Met by Serge and pregnant married

Nicky, beaming with happiness. Janetta bought her some blue and white wool and she at once started knitting a tiny vest, calling constantly for help and advice. Serge was rather silent as we sat round the fire last night. Janetta and Jaime both feel that he is 'against the world', and to some extent out to get from people what he feels the world has denied him. He and Nicky had lingered on and on here, and their departure has been several times postponed. How they will live when they get to London no one can imagine, as he has no money and no work. I grope for the key to his character, and it interests me. I asked Janetta what Georgie thought of him. 'She is very impressed by him'. Janetta and Jaime seem extremely close and happy, and Jaime said he adored Tramores and could hardly bear to tear himself away. Janetta is absorbed in the things growing in her garden, almost to the exclusion of everything else. Each bud is lovingly inspected everyday. The house is a marvel of taste and beauty, and basic furniture has sprouted as it were from its walls. The silence and peace are wonderful".

On the 16th she added: "I have been surprised by Janetta's complete absorption in her life here, and lack of any thread of desire leading back to London, Georgie, Julian, Magouche, all that is happening there. When Nicky and Serge have left, and after Rose goes to live with Derek, what will take place on these cleared decks? I'm not at all sure how much she plots the future, nor how. But her pride in this magic creation of Tramores, and love for it, is of course completely understandable. I question myself: what do I feel for Tramores? If I were Janetta, should I love it as I loved Ham Spray? Yes for its beauty and atmosphere and the fact that it is a growing organism, but with its appalling road and the village quite a trudge away, and without light, hot water or telephone, I feel we are putting back the clock to the eighteenth century".

A few days later, Frances seemed to find the certainty she was looking for: "Janetta talked a good deal about her plans. She has cast in her lot very definitely with Tramores, Jaime and Spain. Georgie must make the best of Montpelier Square and plan her own life, as Janetta did at her age".

In mid-1969 Janetta was faced with a complex situation, even for her: her daughter Georgie, still a minor, announced her intention to marry Jean-Pierre Martel. Although with some reluctance, she and Robert gave their consent. The ceremony took place on 12 July in London.

Frances recalled: "The tempo got faster and faster, culminating in a prestissimo that whirled through Georgie's wedding day, a French-style wedding day beginning with lunch at the Ritz for twelve or thirteen encircling a big, round table. *Luxe, calme et volupté*. Walking the long and spacious corridor, to see with pleasure Jaime advancing towards me, and soon afterwards, Rose, looking very much herself; Nicky, brown, strong and décolleté; the amusing, provocative face of Serge. Robert arrived last, and blew Cynthia up for 'doing the placements all wrong'. I sat between Julian and Jean-Pierre (very fine in white linen suit and black shirt). Georgie wore a black trouser suit; in the evening, in a white one she looked really lovely. Moving in three cars through one of London's 'worst traffic congestions', we at last reached the Register Office at East Sheen, watched the ceremony performed in a Nissen hut surrounded by hideous bunches of flowers, and returned to our bases to gasp for a while before setting out for the evening party at Kew. It was exceedingly pretty and well arranged. I'm now awaiting Janetta for a last supper before she returns to Spain".

On the occasion of the Apollo 11 landing on the moon, Frances wrote on 22 July 1969: "In the last twenty-four hours men have landed on the moon, and for once I wish I had a machine with which to view this extraordinary event. Yet I confess I have very ambivalent feelings about it. At dinner with Tristam and Virginia Powell last night it was the chief topic of our talk, and Johnny said he had sat up virtually all night: he was a keen moon advocate. How the young talk about the television, the wireless! I am positively alarmed by the obsessional nature of their interest, much as I am when I see a two large child in a pushchair, with its mouth stoppered with a 'comforter' or 'dummy'. It's not so much the passivity as the lack of choice, the uniformity of this sucking-in process that I see as baleful. By discharging an identical dose of soporific liquid — and it does often send people to sleep — into the mouth of every child and adult in the country, it must surely standardize them, even if the diet were good — and of course most of it is bad".

And then on October 22nd: "Quiet, beautiful, still, misty days. Janetta again to boiled egg lunch, and a walk for a quarter of an hour in Belgrave Square Gardens, picking up the parti-colored, flattened, plane leaves, just a side did with Nicky a year or two ago. She talked,

more freely than usual, about frustrations in her life. How much does she peer into the future, I wonder? And what does she see there? Julian last night told me 'I ought to go out to Spain this winter and see her'. But 'ought' seems irrelevant with someone one loves so much".

Janetta went to Poland and Russia in early 1970, visiting Warsaw and Leningrad in the company of the Hendersons (Nicko, British Ambassador to Poland, and Mary), Frances, and their close friend Mougouche Phillips, the beautiful American widow of Arshile Gorky. "There is too much still to discover about this Communist world", Frances reflected.

"In the afternoon, Nicko, Janetta and I took the train to Krakow... We were alone in our carriage except for an ancient man, during the five hour run. After gazing out on the snowy wastes I began to long for green; the darkness fell, and we took to our equipment of hot soup, whiskey and every other thing thoughtfully put up by Mary. Krakow station was crowded with short, strong, vital people, hurrying home in their fur hats, warm coats and boots. We found our rooms in a nice, old-fashioned hotel and walked out into the town — the silhouette of its massive sloping walls, towers and arcades looked very splendid. We descended into a drinking-place in a cellar frequented by university students, and drank a hot, delicious spicy wine made from honey, a sort of mead".

As guests of the Ambassador, they were chauffeured around in the official Daimler, with the Union Jack fluttering on the bonnet. Frances felt slightly embarrassed by the attention, unlike Janetta, who openly enjoyed the special treatment she thought she deserved.

On 22 February she gave her first impression on the socio-economic situation on the other side of the iron curtain: "For the first time today I got a sharp twinge from the oppressive nature of the regime... By daylight the ancient buildings reveal dingy, peeling walls and there is an all-pervading air of grimness. In the shops, faces are wooden and unsmiling. The answer is 'No' or 'No more' to everything asked for. In spite of the thaw, or because of it, it's bitterly cold. I'm longing for spring warmth, flowers, freedom, green..."

A longish rest and read, then conversation with Janetta in her room about faraway English things — Rose, Alexandra's relations with her parents. All these three sets of parents, Janetta,

Magouche and the Hendersons, are sharply critical of the others' bringing up of their daughters".

And the next day she comments: "We passed through a large, hideous, rebuilt town, called Kielie I think, and Janetta suggested a stop in a café. N[icko]: 'Oh, you can't; it will be appalling! Ghastly!' However, the chauffeur was given orders and with difficulty found one, full to the brim with cheerful people. Nicko and I drank fruit syrup, Janetta had a symbolic cognac. We had lots of drinks with us in the car. When she again suggested a stop in a sordid-looking café attached to the petrol station where we filled up in the outskirts of Warsaw, Nicko opposed his will to her formidable one, saying we were nearly home, and this time he won... I began to dread our catapulting into the Russian maelstrom and wish the sky wasn't uniformly grey, day after day".

"Janetta has been so invariably sweet and considerate to the Hendersons (as well as to me) that I taxed Nicko yesterday, having once said how 'cross' she was. Perhaps she had changed, he admitted, but she could sometimes be really rude. I believe that this is quite unconscious, and comes from the concentrated pursuit of her own ends which temporarily blinks her.

For lunch we we had several English Poles from the university, a young Spaniard, the ex-polish ambassador to Paris, a dynamically attractive middle-aged man who seem to be talking extremely freely at the other end of the lunch table, and afterwards absorbedly to Janetta in one corner of the huge and hideous reception room, leaving her stimulated and agitated. He told her that many things are much better now than they were. Where there was poverty, starvation even, shoelessness and illiteracy, people now have enough to eat, keep warm and dress well. Having got these things, the young have naturally begun thinking and talking about freedom. He had been a good deal in Russia and even there found young people whose flats were full of secretly printed literature, who knew that liberty throughout the Iron Curtain countries must come from them, from within Russia, but also that they had to bide their time...

Today Janetta and I were taken peacefully and alone to another palace in the outskirts, baroque, charming, light and airy, with beautiful flock wallpapers; and after the lunch guests had gone, she and I and Mary walked in the Lazienki Park, our fingers and noses isolated into tingling blobs by the cold. But the air is crisped and invigorating and one's nose mercifully doesn't run.

Another student to supper. Ping-pong — I can still beat Janetta. Music and talked about psychology with the student".

That same day Frances and Janetta watched a film about the destruction of Warsaw, "sitting alone in a cinema in the square of the old town. Twenty restrained minutes of horror. Is it right to foster the necessarily furious resentment such things produce? Or rather, is it useful? Janetta and I argued in the square. The sun had come mildly out, setting off the Poles' superhuman achievement of reconstruction".

On 24 February the group was due to leave for Russia, but Magouche's flight was canceled due to bad weather and she had to continue her journey overland. Janetta was restless; Frances and Nicko, on the other hand, entertained themselves with the *New York Times* crossword puzzle. "Lunch with Wapler, the French Ambassador here, another middle-aged charmer; an elderly female Bibesco and a delightful Polish composer (friend of the Berkeleys). All sophisticated, amusing and civilized. Wapler deprecates everything. Going to Russia? 'Mais c'est *idiot!*' The composer told Janetta that the Berkeleys [Lennox and Freda] tried to persuade him to leave Poland, but he wouldn't. Someone must stay. All his friends were here. But he has lost his job and become poor because he spoke up against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. He came with us to the Madame Curie Museum, cracking ironical jokes and smiling with steel-trimmed teeth". At the end of the day, after spending the night in Poznan, Magouche finally arrived in Warsaw.

Al día siguiente partieron en tren hacia Moscú. "We didn't cross the frontier till about 1 a.m., after a frightening invasion of military officials in fur hats with impassive faces. All money and traveller's cheques were examined, gold objects listed, and then a young man with blazing

blue eyes flashed his torch under my bed. And a strong, cross Customs woman pointed fiercely at the Polish apples in my basket and said proudly, 'No fruit allowed into the Soviet Union'. Huge arc lamps fixed at a great height made it seem even more as though we were going into a concentration camp. So here we go into this vast and extraordinary country, and hardly a human being have I seen out of my window".

Frances describes Moscow, despite everything, as a *familiar* place. "I suddenly see", Magouche said, as we walked to the Kremlin. 'Everyone *is* the same. They're all equals'. I'm not sure if she meant it as criticism — a little, I think... Though I respond with admiration to this equality, I wish they could be more eccentric without losing it. For equality needn't be identity".

"Janetta's tactics for communication are to speak slowly and softly in English and if they don't understand 'one word', as they generally don't, she seems to find them stupid, like a conventional Englishwoman".

February 28th:

"Janetta finds the bridle of regulations extremely irksome. She likes to ignore them, and would rather eat in a special restaurant where you pay in dollars than use our coupons. This we did last night after an intensely enjoyed performance of The Three Sisters at the Moscow Arts Theater, beautifully staged and acted so that there was complete realism, perfect illusion. They all seemed to be living through these events before our eyes for the first time. Afterwards we drank vodka and ate caviar.

The morning have been gloriously beautiful with a bright blue sky, and we spent it in the Kremlin. The museum and one of the churches were shut; a new little church, very beautiful indeed, had been opened, and we explored at our leisure. Slow but quite good lunch afterwards in an all-fashioned and un-touristy restaurant. Then, I left my two more energetic companions and walked home, buying stumps and postcards".

"I realized I am to some extent irritated by Janetta's claims to special treatment, just as she probably is by my submissiveness", Frances remarked. She, Magouche and Janetta went,

accompanied by a guide, to Zagorsk. "We ended our sight seeing at about one-thirty, but it was a holiday, and our expectation of eating in the good restaurants I remembered there was frustrated. There were huge crowds of people. Outside the tall white wall of the monastery where a lot of booths where healthy, good humored females in peasant dress were selling food of various kinds. 'Oh, look!' said Magouche. 'Cold chicken, hard-boiled eggs!' So I bought enough for us three, and our guide and driver. Meanwhile Janetta was eating a small portion of coleslaw out of a cardboard plate and offering it to us on a spoon. 'It's delicious! Oh, do have some! Would you like it?' The fact that our guide and driver had come back to the car and obviously wanted to be off affected her and me in opposite ways. And not only did Janetta refuse to touch either chicken or eggs, but the force of her personality made Magouche refuse to touch them too, though it had been her idea to buy them. Our guide nibbled a bun, and the remaining store hung about, to be pecked at by me at odd moments during the next two days. Janetta refused to eat any of it, even when we came in so late one night that we could get no food anywhere else. I was reminded of Ralph's account of how she had to invent skiing for herself and would not take advice even from the instructor they have hired. No sooner had we got back to our hotel about three-thirty than Janetta and Magouche went off to the dollar restaurant and came back saying triumphantly that they had got 'delicious food and paid in *roubles*'. I rather unkindly pointed out that the food was exactly the same in all the hotel's several restaurants, and that it wasn't so very clever to buy in *roubles* that we have already paid for in London in coupons".

And she later adds: "That day ended, and the opera over, Magouche suddenly and firmly said she was going straight to bed and Janetta and I were left to eat our delicious caviar and drink our delicious vodka in exactly the same restaurant where they have paid in *roubles* — but paying in coupons this time. What she eats must be *special*, must be eaten *late* and must be her own deliberate choice. She has already said this morning, 'Let's have lunch late, like we did today'. But if you aim at three your food comes at four, by which time my appetite has gone.

And that is quite enough about Janetta and food. Of course she can, and always does, mollify one with her positive sweetness".

On 2 March they visited the Pushkin Museum. "Magouche and Janetta came out discussing whether it was right for the masses to see these masterpieces, and what they got out of it. Janetta thought it was for them just a place to keep warm. She seemed upset, almost speechless and near tears, while Magouche appeared to think, as I do, that many of the young people who go there are studying the pictures with care and intelligently — not holding hands or giggling at all. It is an education, even if they have not got very far with it. You might as well say children should give up arithmetic because they can't understand long division at first sight. Janetta is evidently appalled by what she calls, characteristically, 'IT'. There had been many IT's in her life, and the Russian classless society feels the part perfectly".

The next day they visited the Novodevichy Monastery. "We penetrated the long hall of the monastery where two bodies laid out for burial were more sweet-scented than the old hippo ladies and priests crowding the passage outside. Then we walk through the snow, down towards the river Moskva lying invisible under the general whiteness. Crocodiles of healthy children, rosy and well wrapped little bears, a sleeping swathed baby being pulled on a sledge, boys doing flat skiing. We suddenly seemed to be in the country".

From Moscow they traveled on to Leningrad, where they visited the Hermitage. "Glorious Rembrandts, sordid cafeteria snack, Rembrandts again. One can now get *The Times* here, from under the counter and at a cost of six shillings", Frances wrote.

On 7 March she admitted that this second visit to Russia (the first had been in 1965) was not as exciting as the second, leading her to wonder whether the country had gotten better or worse. Janetta did not seem to be enjoying the experience to the fullest either. "She is very much disgruntled and depressed by IT — I sometimes fear she is disappointed and emotionally upset by the whole adventure... I don't feel Janetta will regret having come, however".

In April, back in London and Janetta in Spain, Frances wrote in her diary: "Julian last night; lovely evening, and a lot of talk about Tramores. He doesn't think Janetta is well, though the trouble is obscure. What? It makes me very anxious. And he says that her obsession with the

horror of Russia never wavers. She even said that one of the awful things about it was that nothing grew there. How could it, in the snow?".

But next month, however, she mentions: "One of the first things Janetta said was that she was appalled and indignant at being told by Ran Antrim that she had 'hated Russia'. This wasn't true AT ALL, she said. She discriminated between the journey and IT. I have looked back over my notes in this book and I think she *did* hate it, but I never thought she regretted having gone. Of course not. Then there was Julian's empathic report after his visit to Tramores. I didn't withdraw, even under Janetta's anxious insistence, my impression of her not having liked Russia. As for enjoying the experience, well, in a sense I have never doubted that she did, but one cannot enjoy a place that one is repelled by as much as one that sets one alight".

5 June: "To Glyndebourne with Janetta to see *The magic flute*... a peculiarly magic production on a magic evening... Janetta had been trying out her new white Mercedes. We ate our picnic in a sunny, windy corner of the garden, watching the confident, privileged classes sweep inelegantly past in their hideous clothes... Janetta has just been to lunch and started talking at once; we talked for two hours, interestingly, poignantly, which left her with a look of serenity she has not had for years. With this has come an air of youth and enhanced beauty. I say for the twentieth time: she is a uniquely valuable, rare and fine person — and I love her most deeply".

After enduring the desolate Russian steppe, in the summer of 1970 Frances sought the Spanish sun. "Janetta was waving from Málaga Airport terrace, and in no time we were purring along the familiar yet ever-deteriorating coast road in her magnificent white Mercedes. It is incredibly luxurious, privileged and comfortable. I capitulated to its grandeur at once and delighted in her delight in it... we set off for Benahavis. The country isn't nearly so parched and papery as in August — there's a lovely lot of green and some flowers. Very smoothly and tenderly Janetta took her superb car through the ford and there we were met by Beorgie, Jean-Pierre and their sweet Chloe, laughing and with forget-me-not-blue eyes". Then she adds: "Janetta has a huge staff. There is a married couple, dark, beaky-nosed Temi (who has a wry intelligent expression and rattling talk); there is the washerwoman, 'Auntie'. We lived

therefore in old-fashioned luxury, and as Janetta shops and cooks, it's hard to know what the servants do. 'Almost nothing', she says. But they are a happy community, and this is invaluable to her, even though they eat mountains of food.

The house has not changed, but blossomed and burgeoned., putting out new embellishments everywhere — plates, jugs, pictures. Every time Jaime comes he brings in a 'present'. (Last night he had a glass picture of the Virgin under his arm)...

In the cool of evening I walked alone up the stream and climbed uphill through dry maquis plants and pines. The three young dressed up considerably in preparation for a descent on the town. Georgie is loving and compliant towards Jean-Pierre, who seems to be champing for something to do. Left alone, with darkness falling, Janetta and I naturally discussed them all. Later we sat out at a candlelit table beside the gurgling fountain under an infinitely remote black velvet sky sprinkled with tiny stars".

As we have seen, Janetta had been somewhat reserved about the prospect of the union between Georgie and Jean-Pierre, and some observations in Frances's diary reveal that her concern had not abated: "A ghost had begun to haunt our paradise — the ghost of Georgie's unhappiness. Impossible to go one as if it weren't there and I now see more reason for Janetta's anxiety, though still inclining to feel that the only help we can give this pair is to bolster Jean-Pierre's ego and somehow include him in the party more than we do. He doesn't make it easy, though".

On March 19, 1971, Frances noted in her diary that Janetta called and, true to her character, said: "Jaime and I are going to do that *marrying thing* tomorrow". As a joke, Frances offered to be a bridesmaid, only to discover that Julian Jebb and Magouche were already chosen to attend at the register office. She sent flowers, feeling keenly aware of her own "insignificance".

The marriage may not have meant much to her, but for others it was a dagger in the heart. One person who did not take the news of the marriage well was Andrew Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, Janetta's lover for several years. In a letter to the romanian princess and painter Balasha Cantacuzène, Patrick Leigh Fermor would say: "Two years ago, Andrew was getting

into a fearful state through a love affair going wrong, i.e. our pal Janetta marrying Jaime Parladé, a charming Spaniard. This brought on tremendous drinking bursts, and rash, angry and incalculable ways. Debo [Deborah Cavendish] didn't mind about the love affairs, but was terribly upset at what looked like an approach to total disaster. It was getting really bad, when suddenly he gave up drinking — of any kind, even beer or a weak sherry — altogether. The change has been total. It really was a heroic act and he has become an angel of goodness and kindness. It's like the lifting of some terrible curse and now both of them, so brilliant and remarkable in their totally different ways, seem to shine with equal radiance".

When the duke died in 2004, however, Janetta sent the duchess a letter of condolence. Leigh Fermor, who attended the funeral in Chatsworth, felt that he should inform her that "Debo was very moved by your letter, which she read to me at the earliest opportunity. It was perfect, absolutely right in every way, not a false note anywhere".

In August Frances visited Corfu in the company of Parladés and Alexandra Henderson (Nicko's daughter and future Countess of Drogheda). James took them to see Jacob Rothschild's house, where he was in charge of decoration, and later they went down to the bay, where "we went off the rocks into beautifully clear water and then lay in the sun or shade".

She also noted that Janetta had resumed her artistic vein: "An at-once noticeable change in Janetta is that she has started doing pen and ink drawings, with the same concentration she puts into everything. They are delightful and accomplished, and I feel it's an excellent sign of her settled happiness. Rose has gone to Crete. Jaime is tremendously involved in Jacob's [Rothschild] house, and apparently happily".

Later she comments: "As for the married pair, they seemed relaxed and content as never before. Janetta takes very little trouble with her appearance, but Jaime looks at her lovingly and is appreciative of what she does, particularly the new drawing phase. It's certainly the best thing that's happened to her for a long time, and I remembered that when a year ago I suggested her going back to painting she said, 'Yes I want to, but I want to do it on the basis of

allrightness and not as a sort of drug'. It's certainly her natural form of expression, and writing was not". And on 31 August: "My delight in what seems to be the stability and happiness of the relationship between the J.'s grows. Whether the ceremony of marriage was cause of effect I don't know, but their life seems much more of a joint life than it was, and Janetta relieved from that restlessness that has possessed her for so long. In fact they appear to delight in each other, and it's joy to see it".

In the first days of September Rose arrived unannounced from Crete "and was in tremendous form, telling us all about her adventures with José and Lucy Durán", musicologist friend of Magouche's family and her husband. Frances goes on: "In the evening heavy train fell suddenly, making spots as big as half-crowns and soon everything was swimming and maquis smells filled the air. Janetta, Rose and I lunched in an opera-air restaurant near the Achilleion — now casino, formerly the house of Elizabeth, Empress of Austria and then of the Kaiser — and afterwards visited it. Its sumptuous garden was full of the smell of jasmine and pines and huge statues of Achilles. One of him trying to pull the arrow from his tendon fascinated Janetta, evoking from her sympathetic groans which greatly amused a gardener. We play Scrabble in the evenings — sometimes in Spanish, very difficult".

During the winter of 1972 Frances and Janetta visited Salamanca, Villagracia, Vigo and Tuy in Spain before crossing to Portugal, where they toured Porto, Obidos and Lisbon. Frances thoroughly enjoyed the trip, sitting comfortably in her friend's dazzling Mercedes. Janetta, for her part, never quite shook off her usual tension. "Janetta sweetly came with me to collect my air ticket to Madrid; we were appalled by the complete lack of taxis and cafés, but having walked from Pombal to Rocio we at last found both, and so got home. Janetta's favourite minus-word is 'worrying' and her plus-word 'calm'. One night in a noisy place she told me she couldn't sleep for 'worrying' whether I could, whereas I had earplugs in and slept like anything. Her sensitivity is exquisite and touches me deeply, but I do worry about her worrying. Perhaps she worries and trembles as a result from the conflict between her gentle, sensitive side, thinking imaginatively about other people's feelings, a side that is appreciative and adaptable,

and the more demanding ‘princess’ who likes to reject rooms and dishes in restaurants — thought I remembered how she loathed it when clients of the Fonda did the same”.

Partly under pressure from his publishers (and Bunny Garrett) and partly with the aim of leaving something to Lynda in the event of his death, Gerald Brenan worked on a new book between November 1972 and March 1973. It was to be entitled Personal Record. During those months he worked intensively, revising the manuscript again and again, correcting, deleting, polishing the style. In November he wrote to Frances asking for her opinion. He would have it very soon.

“Janetta is here: she has talked to Gerald about his autobiography and suggested that he suppressed what would hurt me. He came out with the same old view of Ralph to her, repeating that he knew him long before I had. He has written to me asking me to find out if the Dobrées [Valentine and Bonamy] are still alive ‘as he doesn’t want to hurt their feelings’. I’ve written back saying ‘how about not hurting the feelings of your very old friend Frances?’ and suggesting that he allows me to vet his remarks about Ralph. What, I wonder, will he reply?”.

On January 30, Gerald sent Frances what he had written about Ralph. He appeared slightly uneasy, as indicated by an earlier letter on January 11 where he mentioned, “I have done something to correct [Michael] Holroyd’s [British biographer] false impression of Ralph”. Both letters, seemingly aimed at winning Frances over, depicted a sorry picture of his financial struggles — mentioning dentist bills, plumbing bills, and prostate bills. The primary motivation for publishing, he assured, was getting money from Hamish Hamilton, his editor.

On 7 February Frances wrote: “I sent Janetta Gerald’s dossier and told her to show it to Anne, who has always furiously defended R. against Gerald. They had both taken up the cudgels manfully on my behalf, and say they will write to Gerald. I told Janetta I would be extremely grateful if they would”.

And three days later: “Gerald rankles within me like an ulcer. At lunch yesterday Julian advised me earnestly to return gim soft answers, and merely step up the pathos — ‘please please don’t, it makes me so unhappy’. I don’t believe I am capable of it. I think Gerald is wrong

and I must give a rational explanation if I am to make any response at all. Janetta was furious when I read out some extracts from his letters (to Stanley for instance), and is all for my writing exactly what I feel — reasoned fury. 'I'll go and see that beast as soon as I get back', she said. But anger is a horrible feeling; it erodes my peace of mind. I wake in the night and write letters to Gerald in my head".

She finally wrote a five-page letter to him, where she didn't "disguise the pain and upset he had caused me". "I don't feel at all sure it was in any valid sense the 'best' thing to do, or even in key with my ethical views, and I don't suppose it will have the same effect, but in some indefinable way I feel it would have been a betrayal of my love for Ralph and my knowledge of his character not to have written something of the sort", she reflects.

Lynda was taken aback by the intensity of Gerald's reaction. He quickly became almost hysterical, pacing back and forth, coughing repeatedly (as his father's used to do when angry), nervously rubbing his hands together, and incessantly discussing the matter. Eventually, on February 20, he penned his own furious counter-attack.

"Gerald has written me a frenzied ten-page letter, going into my points at length, telling a number of whopping lies, and saying that as a result of my letter he had become 'vague and senile', 'fallen in to the cañada and been unable to get ou', 'nearly got run over' and 'thought he might had have a small stroke'. What an unexpected development!... I've no desire to give Gerald a stroke, but don't regret giving him a few unhappy hours".

As she said she would do, as soon as she got back, Janetta went to Alhaurín to see Gerald. He was at first frenzied. "I won't talk about it. It's killing me. I don't know why it is, but it is".

Janetta persisted, and when Gerald was prompted to speak about Ralph and his feelings for him, he began to express such "nice things" that Janetta suggested: "Why not write that?" "I will, I will," he said. However, once he started writing, all his complex emotions and reactions resurfaced. He assured both Janetta and Frances that he would make significant alterations. But, finally, he didn't change a single word.

As a result of this episode, Frances and Gerald would not speak to each other for six months.

On 21 February 1973 Frances recounts a meeting with Rose and her boyfriend Robert Urquhart. "I took Rose and her Robert, and also Stanley to see a Verdi curiosity — Stiffelio, and they came back for supper. Stanley and Robert talk enthusiastically and highly technically about music, chiefly Wagner, and seemed to get on well. Robert then gradually climbed on to his Marxist horse and became rather a noisy bore. It started from his criticism of Gerald's Civil War letters which I have lent him. Gerald hadn't taken sides sufficiently — and if one didn't take sides absolutely in such a contingency one was automatically supporting the Right. Lorca had done so — true he was shot by the Right, but he had in fact withdrawn from the conflict and gone on writing plays and poems. I put in a word for Individualism and said I respected those who went on doing what they were good at, and that Mozart had done more for humanity than most politicians. Robert said he would swap Mozart for Lenin any day and that outstanding men, whether good or bad, were just products of the environment. 'Aren't you forgetting the genes?', I cried. Heat was beginning to be generated. Robert said heredity and environment where all one (he was talking more and louder than anyone, with Rose setting up a quiet echo, and Stanley putting in a few very pointful remarks), and went on to instance the effect on the unborn child of what happened to it in its mother's womb. Perhaps like many Marxists he believes with Lysenko that acquired characteristics can be inherited. At half past one I felt tired and rather irritated by Robert's fanatical pursuit of the party line, and said 'Let's go to bed', perhaps too abruptly".

On 3 August Mark Culme-Seymour visited Tramores in the company of his fourth and last wife, Mary Darrall Riely. During lunch, after suddenly announcing that he "loved his life" and "was very happy", he took the opportunity to talk about Derek Jackson before Janetta arrived. According to Frances, Mark said that he was "getting richer and richer and that Rose would not merely be a 'very rich girl' but 'the richest girl in England' with perhaps seven millions".

A few days later, shortly before Frances returned to England, she, the couple and Vicente, a painter friend of Jaime's, attended a performance of *La Traviata*. "Being a gala performance

Janetta gave a lot of thought to her appearance and succeeded in looking like Greta Garbo and quite outstandingly distinguished, with her smooth back silky hair, a long skirt of stiff black silk and a filly blouse, among an audience of piled up dyed hair-dos, brassy grimacing faces, lacquered brown bodies and vulgar emerald green décolletages, all shouting and waving. Jaime was immensely elegant in a striped jacket, and we had little Vicente, who touched me strangely". The staging was correct, Caballé did her best and the tenor accompanying her fulfilled her role well. Janetta had brought sandwiches and a flask of whisky to kept them going, "though Tommasito and his girlfriends next door made brazen demands for a share, which Janetta rather grudgingly gave them". "I don't think Janetta has ever been able to see the point of Vicente. She told me she thought he had always loved Jaime (he's quite a lot older), and sometimes refers to him as 'Jaime's wife'. I like him, he paints sensitive pictures, and his gaze is full of feeling. I found him easy to talk to, and when I asked him which Verdi he liked the best he said, 'The Requiem'. I think his heart is seriously affected. Janetta said afterwards, 'Vicente and you seemed to have lots to talk about. He never talks to me'". And concludes by saying: "I've had the most restful, the happiest time for many years, and I've adored being with Janetta and Jaime".

Another visitor to Tramores, in October 1973, was an old friend of Janetta's: Cyril Connolly, who was looking for a contribution to "Cooking For Love", an occasional series featured in the *Sunday Times* magazine in which writers evaluated the culinary skills of their favorite amateur chefs. He opted to acquaint his readers with Andalusian cuisine as mastered by Janetta, "a phenomenon of our time that would take too long to describe... the pleasant and most stimulating companion that an artist could hope for, one who would drive you to Angkor at the drop of a map". When Connolly arrived in Spain he found that his hostess had extended the invitation to her neighbours Bill Davies and their friends Joseph and Patricia Losey. Finally, the article remained unpublished until the following summer.

On the 11th of the same month Frances wrote in her diary: "Julian took Janetta and me to Katya Kabanova, one of the nicest evenings I've had for ages. Supper at Wheeler's afterwards, and Janetta's highly original thoughts waving gently, firmly and subtly into words. She told us

about talking about God to her hairdresser, and how she said she supposed people find it difficult to get on without him. 'You don't seem to like God much, madam', said the hairdresser whose name was Hugh. 'No — I simply hate him'. The hairdresser showed no dismay, but explained how he sometimes got pleasure from 'going to church, madam".

Around this time Frances slips in the following observation about an aspect of Janetta's personality (which she had already noticed on other occasions), but which cannot be surprising if we take into account her family background, the environment she always frequented and the people she dealt with: "Janetta and I took our crowded first-class carriage to Saxmundham. I'm interested in her increasingly upper-class stance — whence does it come? It makes a breach with Rose; it is very alien to the girl she once was. I mind it quite a lot. She had been irritated by Rose insisting on travelling second class when she went to the funeral of a Jackson relation, and said quickly, 'I'm afraid I think it's a good thing for there to be some people who can make decisions'. And who are treated as superior, and have undeserved privileges, and much more money than other people? She was annoyed at Bernard Levin for accusing Vita Sackville-West of being a snob. I said, 'What makes you think she wasn't one?' J: 'Oh was she?' F: 'Yes, certainly'. I fear that the crack of class distinction and privilege widens between us. But how youthfully charming she was, how kind to me and Heywood, how ravishing when she dressed up in Trelawney's Albanian outfit — little red cap with long tassel, red velvet embroidered jacket, red cummerbund and white cotton trousers. It's marvellous that at fifty plus she can have such almost juvenile elegance".

# Chapter 10.

At the beginning of 1974 the Parladés were planning another trip with Frances. At first the destination was Mexico, then New York. Finally, both. However, although Jaime and Frances were totally on board, Janetta seemed to have certain restraints ("We'll see"). After some back and forth, in which Frances was on the verge of giving up, even feeling left out ("How can the fail to resent my clogging presence?"), things picked up and in mid-January the three of them landed in the Big Apple. "I'm astonished and bowled over by New York; its space, light and sparkling champagne air, the speed of its yellow taxis, combine with a curious ramshackleness. The streets are not as I had always imagined deep dark canyons between high cliffs but full of light and air... A telephone call from Desmond [Shawe-Taylor] asking us all to a drink. His suite of rooms is delightful, and looks straight out on the Central Park... As I look out of Des's window I had the sensation of falling in love with this huge town", Frances said.

13 January: "Sp it was that the impossible occurred — we got Janetta into a bus. Exciting glimpses of this extraordinary place and the river embracing Manhattan. Got off at the Empire State Building and shot up its more than a hundred storeys in several lifts. Before we started Janetta said, 'I'm absolutely petrified. My jaw's shaking', and she wouldn't take the final ascent. At the top the sun was so warm and one could go out on the balustrade and look down on a view of staggering beauty — no other word will do — but one I seem to have known all my life".

The next day both women visited the MOMA: "Janetta and I taxied to the Wall Street area and called at Mary's bank for the huge sum of money she has so generously given me. No inefficiency here in the realm of money, the temple of the American God, where floor upon floor of efficient secretaries tapped typewriters, and executives rose from big leather armchairs

and said, ‘You’re welcome’. Walked to the Museum of Modern Art. A large room of Miro, Picassos, Cézannes, Rousseaus, a youthful self-portrait of Kokoschka”.

The next day they went to the Metropolitan, attended an evening performance of *Tristan*, and dined at the flat of the “J.s”, as Frances called the couple, where Janetta had prepared a delicious dinner. Stanley Olson, who had praised the opera (though Frances and Desmond both thought the performance was terrible), arrived at the flat drunk, “Jaime was the nicest to and about him”.

On 16 January Frances and the Parladés flew to Mexico City via Dallas. “Our hotel has heavy antique furniture and pictures, in the hall a tiled basin of water sprinkled with gardenia flowers”. “We walked out along the main artery, the grisly lively Avenida de la Reforma. Lots of flowers prettily arranged, in markets and stalls. The ‘Indians’ — for the first time we saw them, in the shape of forlorn women sitting on the pavement surrounded by children, each with a few oranges and nuts in front of them for sale. We walked for a long time, stopping at bookshops and travel agents”. “Though I think all our hearts are melted by the poor Indians, I feel guiltier than they [J. J.] do, which is quite useless. No good pouring coins into their laps — the System is wrong. Then Janetta mollifies my dawning indignation at her assumptions of priority and privilege, by sweetly bringing me flowers. So yesterday I riposted with a huge prima donna basket of carnations and roses from the flower market. They are, both J.s, adorable and adored by me, and I’m very happy to see them get on so well, with natural communication and gestures of affection, as when Jaime stops to kiss her cheek as they walk down the street”.

The next day it was the turn of the pyramids of Teotihuacán: “J. and J. had had an exciting evening listening to mariachis (native bands) in the Zócalo... I feel fresh and revived after my night off, and was ready for our outing to the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon... They were sensational — on too vast a scale to be spoiled by the tourists, who even people them like Aztecs, the steps appallingly high and steep. None of us got to the top. We had our first glimpse too of the landscape of the Mexican plateau under a burningly blue sky, with cacti and pepper trees, and mountains all around”.

The next day, 21 January, the tour continued: “We hired a bright yellow Volkswagen and today we set off, independent and free... Janetta is the best map-reader I know, as good as I once was (but am too anxious to be); Jaime an excellent planner. However, the monastery church of Tepotzotlán, with an elegantly elaborate facade was shut. On the Pashuco, where silver is mined and shows greyish in the sliced earth. Janetta a little princessy: ‘I want this, and also that, but not this and that together’. Has Andrew [Devonshire] ‘spoiled’ her a little too much? Jaime makes a wry face but laughs and is patient. And it must be said that, more than anyone I know, she wants others to have what they want as well as herself. And exactly. She can’t eat meat, doesn’t like the look of Mexican poultry and there is little fish, so she is left with eggs and vegetables. She also sleeps very little and looks tired — Jaime is good at dropping off for a short nap and always takes a siesta”.

At the end of the month they visited Morelia “a vine town built of pinkish stone dominated by its cathedral — handsome except in detail. We might almost be in Spain, which may be why some people prefer the exotic pyramids. Jaime loves the Spanish colonial architecture and snaps away at windows and mouldings”.

They passed through Tasco, which Jaime judged to be a “tourist trap”, and continued on to Cuernavaca, which was supposed to be the “center of homosexuality”, “and when we at length found a rather plushy hotel with a big and peaceful garden, it was assumed that the double room was for Janetta and me. Not for the first time — the trouble being that Jaime looks fantastically younger than he is. So does Janetta with her elegant figure, springy walk and hair untouched by grey, and I admire her for not trying to enyouthify her face”.

January 28th: “Janetta dreams every night that she has killed someone: once it was Freddie Ayer”. But Janetta was not the only one with bizarre dreams: “Ralph doesn’t die but deliberately leaves me — in this case to join someone else in Lisbon. Janetta show her true sensitivity and kindness and said ‘I’ll go with you there’ and gave me whisky. We found Ralph, and knew it was him though he was in every way the opposite of himself, wearing smooth dark clothes, looking at me with dark unloving eyes, and making an impression of dishonesty.

Still dreaming I cried, and cried and cried, and then thought if that's what he's like I don't love him anymore".

Unfortunately, shortly afterwards, on their way to Oaxaca, they suffered a taste of the insecurity in the region: "Jaime came down to breakfast with the look of a little boy in disgrace. During the night (all through which they have been kept awake by thundering buses and lorries) thieves had caught sight of Janetta's handsome red suitcase which was on the back of the car, instead of the boot where it is generally stowed, and broke open the window and stole most of its contents. Not, marvellously enough, a briefcase of Jaime's with his tickets, passports, etc. He blamed himself, and of course it was madness, but as Janetta said she was just as much to blame. It mainly contained a nice new corduroy suit of Jaime's and some shoes, also presents for Georgie's children — little dresses, *rebozos* for the servants. But the red suitcase is a beloved symbol for Janetta, dating from luxury days with Derek. The police came, the horrid people in the hotel tried to blame the night porter, saying such a thing had never happened before. 'They are lying', said the police, 'several cars had been stolen outside that hotel'". "We drove off under the shadow of this our first disaster. Janetta looked worn and sad, and Jaime showered her with loving caresses and attentions".

On 10 February they stayed at the Lastia Hotel in Puebla. "A band of *mariachis* arrived to entertain us with folkloric tunes. 'Oh, don't hate them', Janetta said to me — unnecessarily for I loved them".

And three days later Frances wrote: "Back to pack alas! Order myself to be wakened at 7 a. m. and out to dinner at the Swiss Restaurant. Janetta brought me flowers and I hope to get the carnations at least to New York. Their kindness and care of me makes me cry. I was even inordinately flattered because Jaime says my 'Spanish rings a very sound bell'... Although we had kissed a fond goodbye outside our bedroom doors, Janetta took the trouble to get up and come into my room, where I was gently pounding about at seven this morning, looking sweetly seductive in her dressing-gown of fine white wool, and incredibly young, with her hair round her shoulders".

On 27 May 1974, in London, Nicky Loutit celebrated her marriage to Patrick Maxwell. Frances recalled: "Janetta came over specially for Nicky's wedding to her Patrick, and this gave enormous pleasure. Slight shrinking beforehand there was, at the prospect of all the elaborated paraphernalia — flags, flowers, etc. — but it was a triumphant success. There were flocks of children, including all their own, running hither and thither wearing pretty coronets of wilde flowers. Patrick look handsomer than I've ever seen him in a pale olive green velvet suit, and Nicky with her dark hair well cut and a charming floating dress, her face one beam of happiness... The garden was full of flags and flowers and the ground-floor room, opening onto it, held a long and beautiful Turkish-looking repast, at which we sat on two rows of cushions. Fantasy, imagination, love and happiness infused the whole scene... I stayed in London for the wedding and was rewarded by Janetta coming to dinner on Friday, along with Robert and Julian... Janetta entertained us at her most charming, with accounts of Tramores' household enlarged by an enormous Moorish woman whom they picked up in the street and who kisses Janetta whenever she sees her".

In 1978 Nicky and her husband joined the Rajneesh Ashram in Pune, India, where she adopted the name "Rashida".

On June 28th Frances wrote: "Janetta has paid yet another visit here, delightful in their confidence, but making one wonder about her occasional restlessness. There was yet another seventieth birthday party at Patrick Kinross's, which depressed her 'by the general antiquity'. Something of Madame Tussaud about it perhaps". Little by little, decay, deterioration and death overtook everyone. A year after his seventieth birthday, commemorated with a grand dinner at the Savoy, Connolly suffered a heart attack while staying with Barbara at the Mas du Colombier, and subsequently flown back to. On 22 November 1974 Frances wrote: "Another lovely visit from Janetta mainly to see Cyril, who is dying it's thought, and support those who are helping him to do it. He has no money, so a fund is being raised among his many rich friends to pay the medical bills". The costs incurred during his final weeks at the Harley Street Clinic and St Vincent's Hospital in Ladbroke Grove were covered by his friend Sir Harry d'Avigdor Goldsmid, who remarked: "Cyril is dying beyond my means". The wartime world was

briefly resurrected around his deathbed, with visitors including Janetta, Barbara, Sonia, and Anne Dunn. He died on 26 November 1974.

In the winter of 1975 Patrick "Paddy" Leigh Fermor, an old friend of the Partridges and Janetta, visited Tramores. In a letter to Diana Cooper he relates that she came to pick him up in Malaga in a "Range Rover that could have knock a hole in the Bastille". The house "is marvellous, built about a ruined Moorish tower... in an interlock of mountains forested with pine and cork-oak, where wild boar roam... It's very comfortable; blazing fires, half-manor house, half-farm, where the life centres on a great beamed kitchen with flags underfoot, hanging hams, a green parrot, two dogs and a cat in the same basket... I love Janetta and Jaime. Different but congruent, they have some light and fine-boned quality in common... Lovely walks through the woods, which are full of streams — so much water seemed a miracle to our parched Maniot eyes — that the tiered gardens thrive like a marvellous jungle under control; in the evening there is chat, music and the Dictionary Game into the small hours".

On 1 February 1975, from Kardamyli, Greece, he wrote to Balasha Cantacuzène, a Romanian noblewoman with whom he was in love, giving some more details: "We were met at Málaga airport by Janetta Parladé, in a great tough truck-like car, suitable for rough terrain, in pouring rain. She's a tremendous friend of both of ours, and very difficult to describe, but I'll try. The factual details are easy: a distant relation of Prue [Branch]'s, only worth mentioning because there is some indefinite similarity somewhere, the same spontaneous, un-forced freedom from convention, and unconscious poetical aura. Nancy Mitford based 'The Bolter' in *Pursuit of Love* half on Dina Haldeman, and half on her [Janetta's] grandmother (née Ruthven), whose frequent fugues shocked the 80s and 90s. From a brief Orr-Ewing marriage, J's eccentric mother was born. She married a Colonel Culme-Seymour, who commanded the Rifle Brigade in the first War, had two children, and was killed on 'Hill 60' in the Ypres Salient, whereupon she immediately married his second-in-command, who had won the VC saving the same hill: offspring, a boy called Rollo (promising poet) who was killed in the RAF in 1940; and Janetta. He became a clergyman and classics master at Harrow, separated from his wife, and, for some reason, hatred reigned between Janetta and him. (He sound[s] a terrible

conventional bigoted prig.) So J. was very much in her mother's camp, then on her own until Ham Spray and the Partridges, and the whole Strachey-Carrington aura and the dying breath of Bloomsbury became her mental and physical habitat, and with writers and painters for friends. She used to be tremendously farouche, but not now; very quiet and thoughtful and very beautiful in a way that grows, rather than bursts on one: slim and light 'unopulent' — as a girl or boy of 15 with a lovely clear look: fine bones, blue-grey eyes, skin and straight floppy hair the same light colour, usually tied back at the nape to keep it out of the way, like one of Nelson's midshipmen, and a slightly sad or solemn expression, lit with frequent laughter. No vanity at all, and blessed (or burdened) with an involuntary knack of inspiring love, which she always retains as friendship (three marriages & three daughters). The one which, for years, might have threatened the worst complications has been Andrew Devonshire, who longed to chuck everything for her. Thank God, although very fond of him (he still adores her to desperation) it was the last thing she ever wanted or thought of. (It was an agonizing time for me, as I love both her and Debo [Deborah Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire].) A good amateur painter; but her real passion is cooking, which she does brilliantly, quietly and with a miraculous lack of fuss: one always seems to be sitting in [a] beautiful tiled-floored kitchen, with a large green parrot in a cage — or out — two dogs and a cat asleep in a basket, with hams and onions hanging from the beams; glass in hand, talking and laughing, while she unhurriedly chops, bastes, stirs and talks (helped by Zora, a nice fat Moorish maid from Ceuta or Tetuan), till suddenly she pulls something out of the oven, and, in a moment, we are all round a table at one end, with candles twinkling and one's knees under a thick scarlet tablecloth, toes warmed by one of those bronze charcoal braseros underneath, eating something glorious; and only breaking off now and then to draw another cork. Jaime Parladé — they've been married five or six years, but together much longer — spends much of the day in Málaga or Marbella, or along the coast, building and decorating houses, and laying out gardens — he has a sort of imaginative genius for botany and horticulture. Though his hair is chestnut, he is a sort of Spanish version of Janetta in lightness and harmony and charm, so that they look very akin; a Bohemian breakaway from smart, prosperous, very anglophilic, bridge-playing parents. (His mum, Doña Paloma, was a famous beauty, by all

accounts.) He's also very funny, loves history and painting, and knows a great deal. Bisexual in an effortless Mediterranean way — a bit like Napier Alington was — but worshiping J., as she does him".

Ten years later, in 1985, Janetta, Jaime and Joan, Leigh Fermor's wife, toured Hungary. However, Paddy was shocked by what he saw on the trip. He would visit Romania and Bulgaria, doing the first part of the trip all by himself, and join the rest in Sofia.

Paddy was already cognizant of the detrimental effects of East European Communism. During his visit to Transylvania, he had witnessed roads leading to nowhere, widespread hunger, and the devastation caused by collectivization, and what Dervla Murphy defined as the "ugly, impoverished, dispirited villages... their sturdy dwellings replaced by dreary rows of jerry-built farm-workers' blocks". Despite witnessing these distressing changes, Paddy's last two visits reaffirm his memories and served as inspiration for writing *Between the Woods and the Water*.

But this time, something went awry. Upon arriving in Sofia, Joan and Janetta were dismayed by how downcast he appeared, offering scarcely a word about his travels or activities. As they explored Bulgaria, the situation failed to improve. Leigh Fermor, who hadn't visited Bulgaria since before the war, was "utterly crushed" by what he found, according to Janetta. Rudolf Fischer noted that the changes in Bulgaria were strikingly similar to those he had observed in Romania. Yet, despite this, Janetta remarked that he seemed both dismayed and disoriented. "He kept saying 'Just around the next corner we'll see such and such', and it never appeared. Most of the best things he remembered were Turkish, but all the Turkish buildings and every vestige of Turkish culture had been demolished". At one point, they arrived at a location that he was confident would remain untouched — "and there were four hideous tower blocks in the middle of a wilderness: one could not imagine why they had been built". Farming remained largely unmechanized, and he found solace in the abundance of horses and carts, as well as people working in the fields with scythes. Joan jokingly teased him for resembling a Rip Van Winkle: "she said it was as if someone had come to England still expecting to find people in smocks and gaiters, sucking on straws". They held onto hope that eventually, something would

trigger a memory or evoke an image, but the bleakness of the concrete surroundings seemed to have the opposite effect. "As if his own memories were being eradicated as we watched... The whole thing had been a terrible mistake", Janetta reflected.

By the summer of 1983, Janetta and Jaime had made the decision to move into his family's old farmhouse, Alcuzcuz, situated in the hills above the coast, not far from Marbella. Meanwhile, Tramores was to be sold. Janetta had been contemplating for some time about Frances' living arrangements in her later years. Despite her remarkable energy and active social life, she sometimes experienced feelings of loneliness and apprehension about the future. Similar to what Janetta had proposed after Ralph's death, she suggested that Frances should come to live with them. Frances wrote: "I was quite undone, I had turned over the possibility of going to live near them in Spain. But this! Choking back my emotion, I heard her say: 'You know I love you more than anyone'. Even tho' I know this isn't true, it moved me to the quick". She promised to give it some consideration, but she made it clear that she could only contemplate living somewhere nearby yet separate, rather than under their roof.

Despite ongoing discussions, Frances's diary entries reveal that she knew from the outset that it wouldn't be the right choice for her. She was determined not to be reliant on anyone, not even Janetta. Moreover, while southern Spain was undeniably beautiful, she felt that living there permanently would be isolating and unreal compared to visiting. Although Alcuzcuz, like Tramores, held significant sentimental value for her as a refuge, her solitary base in London had become her home. She tried to explain this to Janetta: "I emphasized the necessity, as one grew older and feebler, of keeping going the activities and human contacts that remain, as well as retaining those things into which ones roots have plunged — my books, mi violin, my contacts with people, ability to telephone them, *The Times*, the post, the radio. The less of a life it becomes, the more important to sustain it". Yet, despite her reservations, Frances found herself tempted more than once, and Janetta's loving kindness held significant sway in her considerations. "The principal stupendously heartwarming fact is that they should for one moment think they want me. And my astonishment is great that I should all this time have had the desire to be wanted, and loneliness because I felt I was not".

On 31 October 1983 Julian Jebb, a close friend of Janetta and Frances since the mid-1960s, killed himself at his home in London. All of his friends had witnessed his ongoing battle with depression and alcohol. While sitting beside Janetta at the Requiem Mass at Westminster Cathedral, Frances' sorrow was overshadowed by her innate aversion to the ceremony. A mutual friend always recalled how she and Janetta waved away the incense with their handkerchiefs.

In 1984 Tramores was sold to Sir James Goldsmith and the couple moved to Alcuzcuz, where they created a home of comfort and harmony, arranged around a courtyard with a fountain. Jaime continued with his decorating and antiques business (he set the template for the Costa del Sol in its heyday), while Janetta, who had resumed painting, created a stunning garden and showcased her skill as an accomplished watercolourist. For every town that appeared on the horizon, Janetta planted a tree.

Their house, just like Tramores, was loved by countless visitors and became a hospitable refuge for friends. James Lees-Milne visit in 1990, and left an admiring account of "a grand Spanish villa belonging to the (today) absent husband Jaime, said to be Spain's leading decorator of international repute", the décor so meticulously crafted that even a discerning connoisseur like Lees-Milne couldn't determine whether the house had been recently decorated in the Edwardian style or was an authentic dwelling from 1910. As for Janetta, he said she was a "once-beautiful, sophisticated, intellectual moll... She frightened me to death on the two or three times I met her at Ham Spray in the early 1950s, is now a bad seventy, straight hair pulled back like a skull-cap, one drooping eye, raddled skin, hollow chest and bulging stomach. But nice and welcoming and undoubtedly clever. Very anti-Christian, which upsets me rather. She destroyed the chapel in the house — 'I can't abide such things... had to take away cartloads of saints'. Fanny Partridge staying and the only other guest present. She has long been a sort of mother to Janetta".

They enjoyed a lunch consisting of *foie gras* with truffles, fish brochettes, and chocolate cake. Afterwards Lees-Milne surveyed the house and its furnishings — the chairs adorned with Turkish carpet fragments, the leather-seated fenders, and the Edwardian lamps and shades.

He examined the artwork, watched a grey parrot in the courtyard mimicking Frances as she danced before it, and strolled through a garden filled with exotic plants.

On 15 March 1990, for Frances ninetieth birthday, Janetta gave a supper party (the cake shaped like a book) for about thirty of her nearest and dearest before taking her back to Spain with her. It was, Frances recalled, “a fabulous day, a day its significance is impossible to understand... Looking back at its steamroller approach I really believe I had equated it with death, for how could anyone be so old and still alive?”.

Frances was with Janetta in Spain when Princess Diana died in Paris, and she found herself captivated by the events that unfolded in the aftermath of the tragedy. “She is becoming beatified... an extraordinary manifestation — a peaceful French revolution”. Frances could still swim, although Janetta insisted on assisting her down to the pool. As time passed, Frances grew increasingly concerned about the possibility of becoming a burden: “She is perfectly kind to me as an invalid, but she leaves the room whenever we are alone together... where is our old intimacy? I fear I irritate her”. It’s true that Janetta sometimes finds Frances’ refusal to acknowledge her limitations frustrating. Moreover, she was deeply preoccupied with her daughter Rose, whose second child was causing considerable anxiety, and had perceived Frances as unsympathetic in this regard. Some of Janetta’s friends, like the Frys, occasionally felt that Frances’ dependency on her placed strain on their relationship. In the winter of 1997, Janetta attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to persuade Frances to arrange for more assistance, especially after a couple of incidents where Frances struggled to get out of her bath. Even after suffering a bad fall resulting in a head injury, the old lady remained adamant. Instead of seeking additional support, she decided to build up her strength, engage in more exercise, and take more walks.

On 15 March 2000 Frances turned 100, and once again Janetta organized a party with her old friends (what was left) at the Savile Club. On 3 April she wrote in her diary: “I am dug into my 101st year — surely a good time for fresh starts!”, and made the next resolution: “To go on trying to think and write if possible”. Although she felt exhausted by all the excitement, she

wrote: "Strange as it may be 'crossing the bar', in other words becoming 100 plus, seems to make me feel more my old self".

Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit dedicated almost thirty years of his life to working for the United Nations, primarily with the World Health Organization. Upon retirement, he relocated to Morocco, where he played a significant role in the establishment of RADIOPCOM, a company specializing in radio communications and electronic engineering. Despite remarrying and having two more children, he always held Janetta as the love of his life. He passed away on October 31, 2003, at the age of 90.

Robert Kee became a highly successful writer and broadcaster. His best known works included 1939: *The World We Left Behind* and 1945: *The World We Fought For*. His wife's novel *A Respectable Man* (1993), published after their divorce, contains an amusing and by no means respectful portrait of life at Ham Spray in the 1950s. Robert died on 11 January 2013, at the age of 94.

Throughout their lives, Frances and Ralph Partridge steadfastly uphold Bloomsbury's values in an ever-changing world and remain committed to their pacifist beliefs against all challenges. Following Ralph's passing in 1960, Frances bequeathed a series of Knightsbridge flats in Wiltshire. In the late 1970s, she commenced publishing selections from her diaries, beginning with *A Pacifist's War* in 1978. Nine volumes were released during her lifetime, and she gained significant literary acclaim, becoming a notable literary figure. Frances passed away on February 5, 2004, at the remarkable age of 103.

After her affair with Jackson and being abandoned by him, Angela Culme-Seymour moved to Sydney with her two children. "I want them to finish growing up in Australia with a stable home life", she told a local magazine. During the holidays, they traveled to Greece.

Despite being married and divorced several times, Angela never benefited financially. She supported herself by selling her paintings, and by writing articles on travel, interior decoration and fashion for various magazines. "When I paint to please myself I do landscapes. When it's

for money I paint murals, decorate trays, wastepaper baskets, and that sort of thing, with flowers, and design Christmas cards".

She also planned to write a novel. "Not my own life, although bits from it will be useful". Half a century later, as an octogenarian, she published a memoir dedicated to her grandchildren: *Bolter's Grand-Daughter* (Writersworld, 2003).

Back in England, in November 1968, her son-in-law Colin Crewe introduced her to the Turkish-British thinker, mystic and spiritual teacher Bulent Rauf, grandson of Isma'il Pasha, "The Magnificent", Khedive of Egypt and ruler of Sudan from 1863 to 1879, and a descendant of Muhammad Ali of Egypt. From 1945 to the early sixties, he was married to Princess Faiza, sister of King Farouk of Egypt. Bulent was a devoted scholar of the works of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, the famous mystic, translating his *Fusus al-Hikam* into English. Angela, for her part, translated from the French and assisted her husband in establishing the Beshara School of Intensive Esoteric Education at Chisholme House in 1973. The school, which promoted in the first instance self-knowledge and "the realization of love as the main motive of existence", gave her some solace and spiritual satisfaction. They married in 1977.

Around 1980 she resumed contact with Janetta, with whom she had not spoken again after the scandalous episode with Jackson in 1953. However, Angela's son Johnny Culme-Seymour was among those who appreciated Janetta's sharp and humorous company in her later years. Her youthful acquaintances were privileged to enjoy her excellent culinary skills, and she served as a trusted confidante with whom they could openly discuss any topic.

Angela became honorary president of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society founded and chaired by her husband, and spent her last years at Chisholme House, Scotland, earning the esteem of her collaborators and students.

She was widowed in 1987, and died on 22 January 2012, a few months before her 100th birthday.

Almost entirely self-educated, yet possessing keen intelligence and brevity in her expressions, Janetta embarked on reading Roman history and classical literature at the age of 90, relishing discussions on these topics. She would often join the writer Caroline Moorehead for lunch or, somewhat obsessively, to watch films. Following their viewing of *God's Own Country* in 2017, Caroline pondered how Janetta had responded to the explicit gay sex scenes. Janetta casually remarked that she hadn't minded at all: "Bloomsbury knew all about buggers".

When Jaime died in January 2015, Janetta returned to London and took a flat in Cadogan Square. She died on 9 June 2018 in Marbella, Spain, aged 96.

In *Lost Girls: Love, War and Literature, 1939-51*, David J. Taylor closes Janetta's story with the following statement:

"It is a good decade-and-a-half since I last set eyes on Janetta. Back then she was in her late seventies, spry and voluble. Now she is deep into her nineties, bent, frail and less talkative, but with a hard grey eye still glinting vigilantly away. In fact, as terrifying elderly ladies met in the course of my professional duties go, I'd put her straight into the Deborah Devonshire/Baroness Warnock class. There is an immediate difficulty when I try to hand over the caddy-full of choice Fortnum and Mason tea, purchased on the way over from Piccadilly. 'No...' Janetta murmurs sadly, as she turns the shiny receptacle over in her hands. 'No, I'm afraid. I really...' Is there a problem with the tea, I nervously enquire. It turns out that Janetta only drinks Chinese, which this variety is not, with a squeeze of lemon. Well, perhaps some of her guests might like it, I suggest. She looks doubtful, and then, anxious not to appear rude, pronounces that 'It's got a very pretty tin.'

The tea stowed away, we repair to the sofa, the tape-recorder — at which she darts several suspicious glances — between us. And here another difficulty presents itself. This is Janetta's disavowal of the thesis I intend to propound. Having attended to Peter Quennell's summary of the Lost Girls and been asked if it has any meaning to her, she instantly demurs: 'No, none at all. I think it's rather silly, really, because there weren't odd girls in and out of Horizon. I mean, there was always Lys there the whole time devoted to Cyril and working like mad, and there

was always Sonia...' But did she not regard herself as part of the Horizon team? No indeed. 'I hardly ever went to the Horizon office, I mean truly hardly at all. I mean, I remember that flat and perhaps ate buns there, but I never went to one of their dinner parties or anything like that'.

Nevertheless, she consents to unpack her memories of first meeting the other members of Connolly's ménage: of encountering Barbara at Topolski's studio in Maida Vale; of being introduced to Sonia by Connolly at the height of an air-raid. 'I think we were in one of those buildings in Piccadilly looking out of the window at... searchlights and things... He'd just met this new person he thought was rather fascinating'. By this stage in the proceedings the thought of old scores needing to be settled has strayed into the conversation. There is, for example, talk of the portrait of Lys included in Michael Shelden's account of the Horizon circle: 'I mean she was not this fascinating, intelligent, wonderful person. She really was a bit of a nightmare.' In slight mitigation, as with the tin of Fortnum's bohea, Janetta concedes that 'she was a very good typist'. As for Sonia's role at Horizon, 'well, she practically tried to make out she was its editor by the end'...

Barbara, Sonia, Lys, Janetta and the others may not have been feminists, but their sense of their own autonomy was unusual for the era in which they found themselves, and if they were regularly suborned and patronized by men then they were also capable of turning the tables on their exploiters. Their unhappiness, it might be said, was part of the price they paid for being the people they were. As for their real significance, so much of it relies on intangibles — a way of talking, a way of dressing, a way of behaving, a bat's squeak of individuality only discernible to those within their immediate circle. But every so often, in one of the great English novels of wartime life, in a Bloomsbury diary, in a letter sent back from a Cairo hotel to a Knightsbridge apartment, there comes a moment when the smoke clears for an instant and in the space suddenly revealed to view, glamorous, edgy and inimitable, a Lost Girl can be found making her presence felt.

Janetta died in June 2018 at the age of ninety-six. Clearing out the flat, her three daughters discovered, somewhat to their surprise, that she had kept everything. From trunks and

cardboard boxes spilled forth a host of photograph albums and correspondence files extending back over eighty years. Here were letters to and from her mother in the 1930s, unpublished novels from the post-war era, a cache of flimsy airmails addressed to the Partridges' lair in Wiltshire by the Cairo-and Bari-bound Kenneth. Kept apart from the main archive, and eventually run to earth in a bookcase beneath the bound volumes of *Horizon*, were a dozen or so letters from Connolly, carefully pressed between a card advertising his memorial service at St Mary le Strand, London, on 20 December 1974. Composed on *Horizon* or White's club notepaper, none of them is dated, although the subject matter — the trip to Paris, Kenneth's possible return from the Balkans — suggests that they were written in the last months of 1944 and the early part of 1945. Janetta is 'Dear Janetta'; once or twice, when the emotional thermostat is being turned up a notch or two, 'Darling Janetta'.

But now it is time to put the puppets back in the box, for our game is all played out".



## *Pictures*



Janetta (1939)



Janetta in her typical attire: lamborys, summer blouse and red handkerchief



Geoffrey Harold Woolley



Janet Beatrix Orr-Ewing (1909)



Janetta (1939)



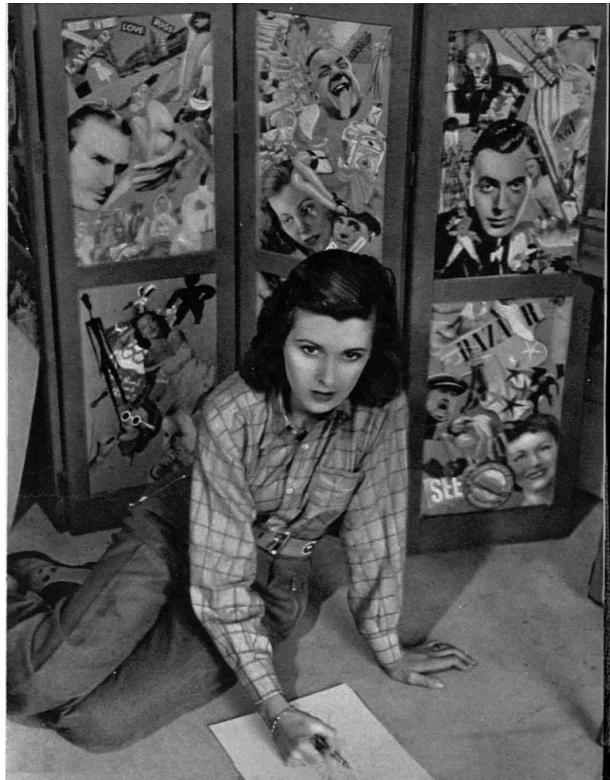
Angela Culme-Seymour with her first husband John Spencer-Churchill (1934)



Angela Culme-Seymour (Lady Kinross) photographed by Cecil Beaton (1940)



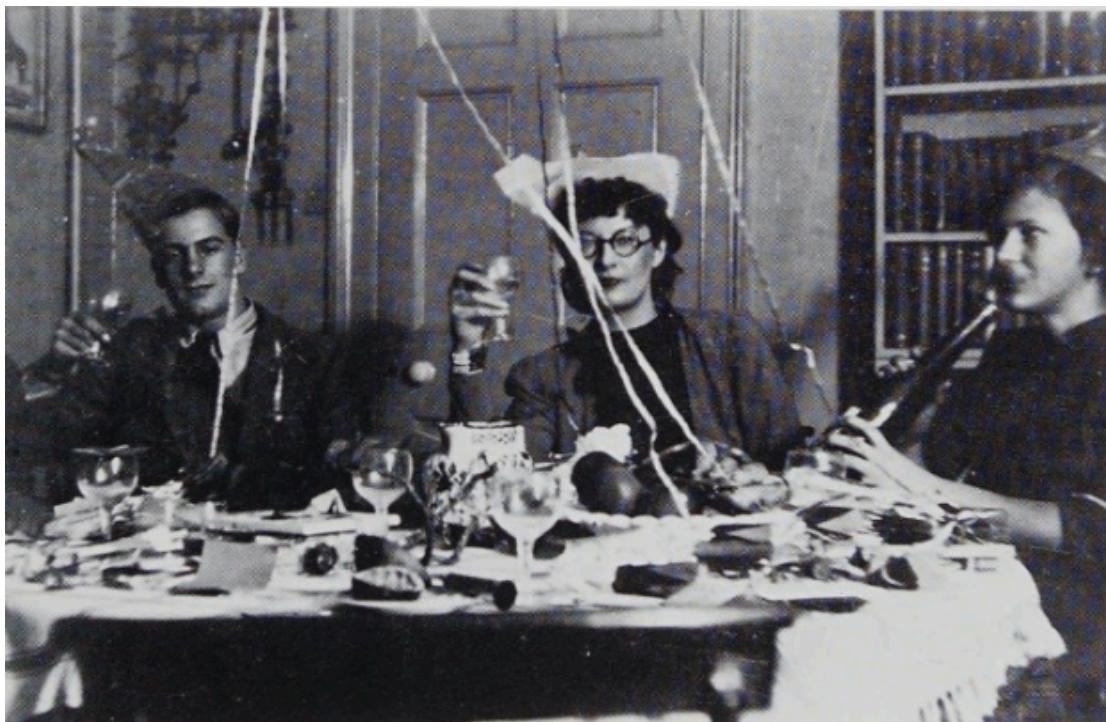
Angela (1938)



Angela in her study (1940)



Jean Bakewell, Angela Culme-Seymour, Cyril Connolly, and Janetta



"The Gloom of Christmas": "Rollo" Woolley, Julia Strachey y Janetta (1937)



Ralph, Frances and Janetta in the 1930s.



Cutting Janetta's hair, Ham Spray (1936)



Burgo mushrooming with Rollo at Ham Spray



Humphrey Slater



Gerald Brenan



Kenneth Sinclair-Loutit (background) leaving for Spain with the Medical Relief Committee.  
Victoria Station, London (1936)



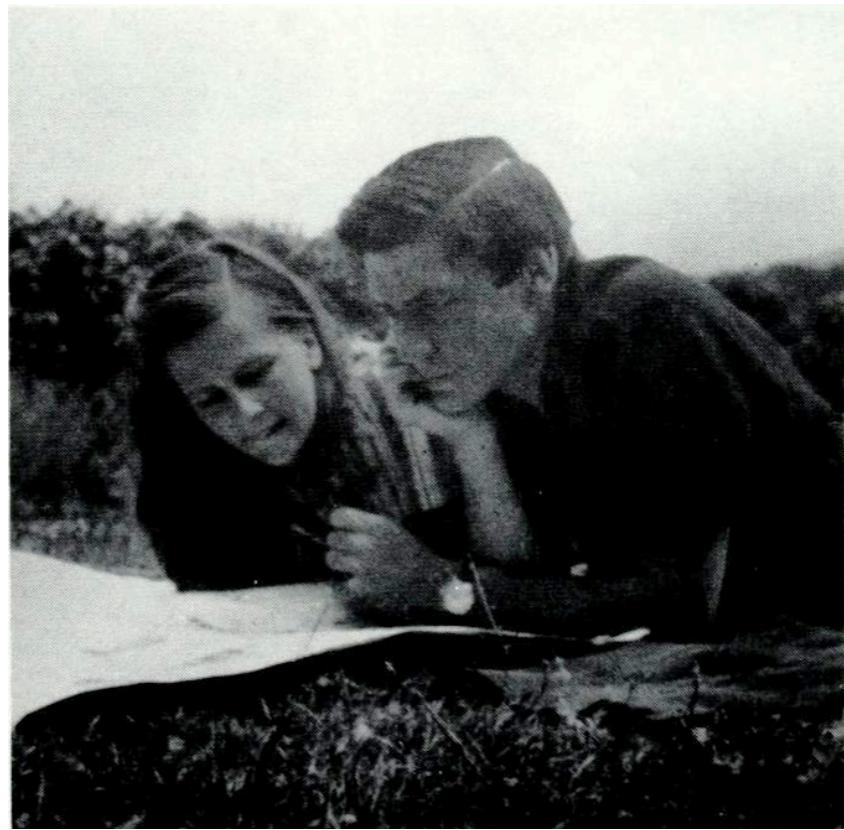
Janetta and Rollo in Cassis.



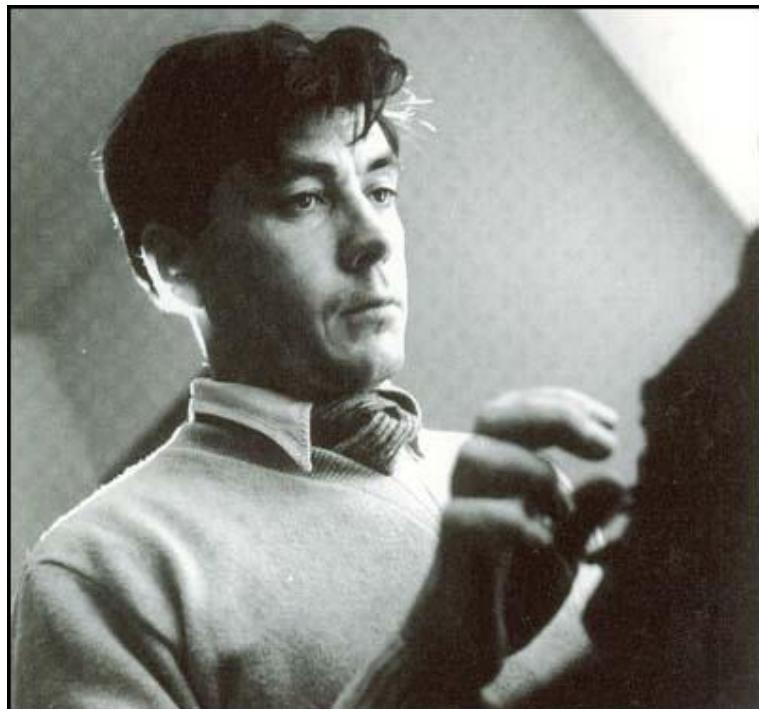
Janetta in the early 1940s.



Raymond Mortimer, Ralph Partridge and Janetta in France.



Janetta and Robert at Ham Spray



Robert Kee



Derek Jackson



Janetta with Robin Campbell and Derek Jackson in Buis-les-Baronnies (1951)



Mark Culme-Seymour



Lucian Freud



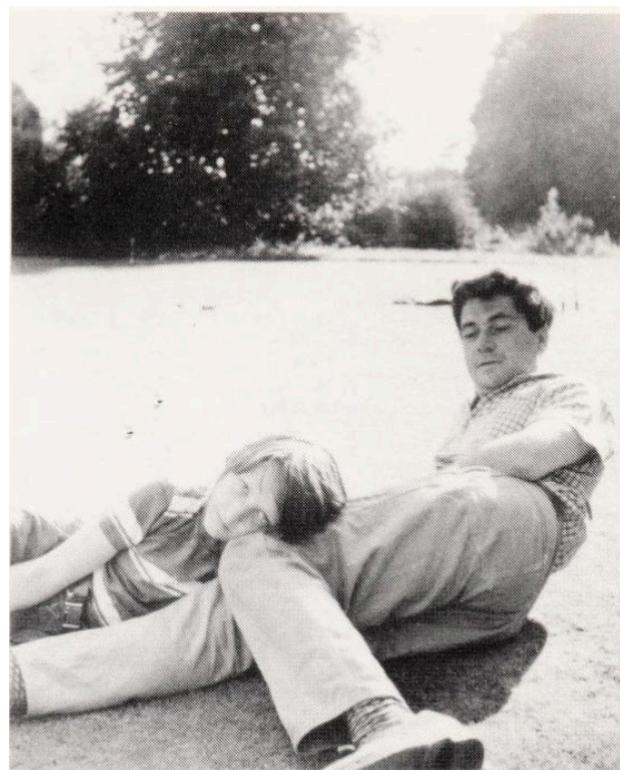
Andrew Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire



Janetta at Ham Spray (late 1940s)



Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy and her cousin Caroline Jarvis (1955)



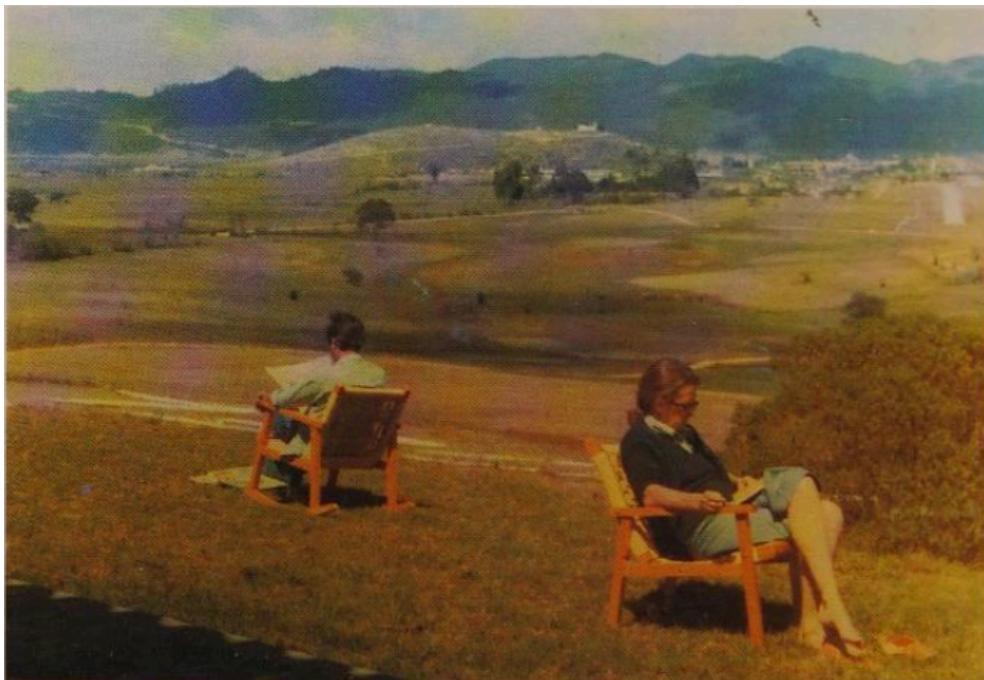
Robert Kee and his daughter Gerogiana



This beach picnic was the occasion when the Partridges first got to know Jaime Parladé (seen here talking to Janetta).



Janetta in Pazo de Oca, Galicia, Spain (1972).



Jaime and Janetta outside the Hotel Rancho, with San Cristóbal in the distance  
(México, 1974).



Janetta and Jaime in Tramores.



Jaime, Francis Bacon and Janetta at the Prado Museum, Madrid (1990).



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